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The American RECORD GUIDE



May, 1955
Volume 21, No. 9

HOW TO BUILD A
LOUDSPEAKER
ENCLOSURE



THIRTY-FIVE CENTS

AN ORGAN TOUR

with E. Power Biggs

ART OF THE ORGAN: *Selections by Purcell, Sweelinck, Pachelbel, Buxtehude, and Bach;* E. Power Biggs (organ). Columbia LP set SL-219, \$11.90.

▲LAST summer Columbia engineers and equipment accompanied E. Power Biggs throughout a good portion of his European concert tour. They started in London, crossed the Channel to the Netherlands, swung southeast then northward in Germany, and then into the Scandinavian countries. The principal objective of this safari was to give those of us who have neither the time nor the carfare to make such a trek representative samples of some of the noblest musical instruments our world has to offer. This superbly recorded set—a bargain by any standards and undoubtedly one of the outstanding issues of the year—has accomplished that purpose with ease. And, in the process, it has left an ample residue of additional achievement. Heard on the type instrument their music was conceived for, Sweelinck, Pachelbel, Buxtehude seem in their best work more vivid in expressive coloration, more shipshape in tonal architecture than ever before. It is as if three centuries of grime had suddenly been removed from a roomful of paintings that had always commanded respect but that now communicate the full force of their vibrant spirits.

In the presence of such a transformation, many new thoughts leap to the mind: An entire body of musical literature may be rehabilitated through recordings of such instruments. It is possible we have underestimated Biggs and other American organists in their previous efforts to play Baroque music on instruments incapable of producing the sounds 17th-century composers had in mind. Isn't it strange that modern scientists have so often failed to equal the organ building techniques of such old craftsmen as Schnitger

and Compenius? Which reminds me to tell you that not all the organs represented in these recordings are old. Some are of the postwar period. The new Steinmayer organs are representative of modern skills used with enviable taste. The other new ones are not too far from this standard, with the exception of London's new Festival Hall organ which is decidedly disappointing in Bach's *Toccata in D minor* (why wasn't the *Fugue* included?).

—C.J.L.

A PARIS ORGAN

BACH: *Trio Sonatas: No. 1 in E flat, 2 in C minor, 3 in D minor, 4 in E minor;* Haydn Society LP disc HSL-119, \$5.95. *Trio Sonatas: No. 5 in C, 6 in G; Pastorale in F, Fantasias in C minor and G;* HSL-120, \$5.95. Marie-Claire Alain (organ).

▲THE AMOUNT of pleasure one is apt to obtain from these two well recorded discs will probably depend on one's taste in organs for the Bach literature. Though the big bass of the organ at the church of Saint Merry in Paris may appeal as sheer sound to those with speaker systems capable of handling strong 30-cycle notes, the blur of Bach's linear counterpoint may not. This taste finds the instrument poorly balanced, moreover, for the music at hand. If one is to enjoy the trio sonatas, one must surely be able to follow each of three parts without straining the ear to catch an imbalanced strand. It is difficult to judge whether the imbalance I speak of is caused by the instrument or by the performer. In any event, the affair does not increase my already lukewarm affection for the music presented. Hi-fi fans may want one or both of the discs, though, for the bass. It really goes down.

—C.J.L.

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The American RECORD GUIDE

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May, 1955

**Cover Picture: Hilde Gueden, who sings
Viennese Operetta Airs (p. 306)**

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May, 1955

On Record Covers

Editorial

THE SUBJECT of LP covers has become a favorite pastime with record buyers these days, judging from the sly remarks of correspondents and overheard conversation in record stores. Each month, the writer and his staff remark on them, sometimes casually and sometimes otherwise. One presupposes that irrelevancy in art and in other things, mundane or otherwise, can be as annoying to some as it is amusing to others. There was a time when record albums were issued with no art work on the covers. A certain dignity and decorum prevailed in the old days toward the musical content of an album. The first LP releases maintained that time-honored decorum. They were generally free from pictures, caricatures of artists and composers, or modern screwball art. As LP progressed and competition became keen, the necessity of decoration to attract attention started a new trend, which has progressed to the extent that dignity and suitability to its subject matter is no longer maintained. Glamour, often wholly irrelevant in its seductive implication, has materialized with pictures of enticing sirens in sundry poses, designed to attract or divert the customer. At first confined to popular classical releases, this type of cover has even invaded the serious music field—witness many recent releases.

In November 1952, Angel Records was inaugurated, featuring a new trend in artistic display which for decorative design, stylistic distinction and relevancy to the music has seldom been matched, much less surpassed. Angel's much discussed initiative in the matter of covers has certainly resulted in a heterogeneous display of often nefarious art work on LP covers of their competitors, some of which bear no relation to the musical content.

What prompted the above remarks was not a critical dissertation on LP covers but a recent press release from Columbia

Records in relation to a new disc, called "Holiday in Rome" (CL 647), a collection of familiar Italian tunes in instrumental dress.

"According to a recent and rather widely-observed maxim in the record business," reads Columbia's press release, "covers on albums of instrumental music should, whenever possible, display exotic ladies in whatever state of undress the law will allow." Maybe we will yet have the Esquire calendar type of glamour girl on a record cover, if this prevails. Sex appeal may have little or no relation to music, but it has become a modern art commodity that assures sales. The male animal always has been easily duped or tricked by this sort of thing. In the case of album covers, it can prove to be a build-up that is not sustained by the musical content.

The rest of the story from Columbia, regarding "Holiday in Rome," is worth the telling. "Last summer," continues the press release, "Columbia put out a delightful album of instrumentals by French conductor, Michel Legrand, with a spectacularly unorthodox cover—a fat, mustachioed Frenchman, photographed while trundling a melon through a Paris market. Exotic was hardly the word—but what an eye-catcher. Throughout the summer, fall and into the winter months, the fat Frenchman and the album, "I Love Paris," perched steadily on Columbia's best-seller lists. By year-end it was No. 8 among 1954 best-sellers. Everybody loved Mr. Legrand's music and the Frenchman." Glad they got in that "everybody loved Mr. Legrand's music," for the Frenchman does a first-rate job on his familiarly popular music—one that makes for pleasant listening when relaxation is in order. "Holiday in Rome" brings us 16 different popular songs identified with Italy from Sicily to the Alps, as familiar in Naples, Palermo or Turin as in Rome, the capital of Italy. The record opens and closes with De Curtis' *Torna a Surriento* and has old favorites like Leoncavallo's *Mattinata*, Falvo-Fusco's *Dicilencelo vuie*, Vian's *Luna rossa* and Di Capua's *O sole mio*. And on this cover is "a smiling, mustachioed, aproned

Italian workman, contentedly eating his lunch." That picture caught your editor's eye before he read the title or the contents of the record, for it has true human interest—that benign and friendly spirit that prevails among so many of the working class of Italy. It brought back memories of a friendly cobbler with whom we had often stopped to visit in times gone by.

While on the subject of covers, we would like to congratulate Columbia on the picture ones on the recent release of Delius' *Appalachia* (ML 4915) and the latest release of the Philadelphia Orchestra of French music (ML 4983) among others. This sort of picture post-card treatment has an attraction that makes one want to be the willing musical tourist to the sound journey in the shining grooves of the record. Whether eye appeal sustains ear appeal, however, is a moot matter which remains individual with each and every one of us.

Music of the Future

TAPE RECORDER MUSIC: *Invention Low Speed and Fantasy in Space* (Ott Luening); *Sonic Contours* (Vladimir Ussachevsky); *Incantation* (Luening-Ussachevsky). Innovations LP GB-1 \$4.75.

▲THE theory that gave birth to tape recorder music, which is just what its name implies, commands respect because there simply is no effective negation of it. Briefly stated, it is that composers have every esthetic right to make music directly, as a painter does with brush or canvas, thus eliminating the middleman and the interpretative element altogether. So far the fruits of this new philosophy have been far from sweet by nominal standards, but the idea is fascinating and serious listeners cannot but lend their ears to whatever few works have been written in pursuit of it. The leaders in the field are Otto Luening and Vladimir Ussachevsky, both members of the Columbia University music faculty. Luening is himself a flutist, s

(Continued on page 29)
The American Record Guide

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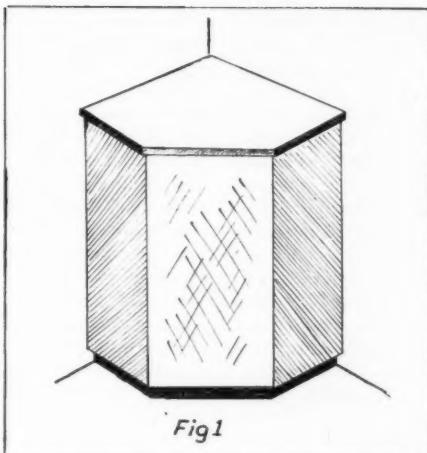


Fig 1

Building a Loudspeaker Enclosure

by George F. Varkonyi

HAVING previously written about the loudspeaker enclosure at some length; I will now get down to cases on the actual construction of a bass reflex enclosure. The one to be discussed is of unusual design and capabilities.

As outlined in previous articles, the bass reflex enclosure is the ideal solution where only relatively small space is available. The overall dimensions of such a unit should be 40" high and 34" wide. These dimensions may not be considered by some as relatively small, but it should be remembered that the unit is designed for corner placement where it takes little space from the room and is ideally situated for the ultimate in sound reproduction.

Fir ply panel, $\frac{3}{4}$ " in thickness, is used for all major parts. This makes for rigidity and freedom from vibration. For bracing, 1" and 2" pine is used. For the ultrapurist, a full cement lining of the large panels is recommended after the entire unit is completed. Chicken wire is nailed

to all surfaces to be lined. Use U nails and plenty of them because the chicken wire must support the cement. "Ready Mix" cement is the easiest to use. Apply this with a trowel over the wire to a thickness of 1" to $1\frac{1}{2}$ ". It is best to do one surface at a time since each surface must be level. This operation may take several days as each layer of cement must be completely dry before the next panel can be done. The following sides should be cement-lined—B, C, D and D¹. As C is the removable back of the cabinet, a 1" by 2" trough must be made for the cement (see Fig. 5). I cannot stress enough the importance of the cement lining. This apparent extravagance will make a great difference in the clarity of base reproduction. The less courageous builder may omit it and still have good results, but for the purist who seeks the maximum results it will be a must. A warning here, however, is in order—the weight of the enclosure will be considerable.

May, 1955

The exterior is designed so that a minimum of finishing is necessary, as this requires considerable experience and special materials not readily available to the average home builder. The entire front face is covered with monk's cloth, which is tightly stretched and stapled or tacked around the edges where the tacks will not show. Other cloth may be used provided that it is of a loose weave and not too heavy. It may be chosen to match a particular décor. (See Fig. 1 and Fig. 5)

The top of the cabinet (part F) is the only unit that requires any amount of finishing. It is attached only after the entire unit is completed. It may be finished in many ways. The simplest way is to use a piece of $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 2' by 2' gum panel (see Fig. 2a). This should be cut to the shape shown and sanded thoroughly and the edges must be rolled. If a clear (blond) finish is desired, the top panel is then ready for shellacking. If a darker finish is desired, it is ready to be stained to the chosen color. Three coats of shellac should be applied, using equal parts of alcohol and shellac. Be sure to allow for sufficient drying time between coats (at least 4 hours). Do not be fooled by an apparently hard surface that may well be gummy beneath. For the more ambitious builders, a moulding can be added around the front edge of the top (Fig. 2b). If

one wishes to paint only the top, a coat of shellac followed by the desired paint is sufficient. Gumwood is specified since the use of fir panel for the top makes proper finishing almost impossible. However, if only a paint job is planned, fir can be used, but two coats of Firzite must be applied first to control the wild grain. Hard wood can be used for the top, but this deserves a really professional furniture finish, and that is beyond the scope of this article.

The kick plate should be painted black. Use clear white shellac with black aniline dye powder added. Use this in the same manner as the clear shellac would be used to finish the top. The "black shellac" also should be used to paint the entire cabinet, and especially the front before covering with the grill cloth. A single coat should be sufficient to seal the wood. No rubbing is required. (If aniline dye is unobtainable use black enamel; however, a coat of shellac first is necessary to seal the wood.) This black paint, in the case of the front panel, is most important. It prevents the cutouts for the loudspeakers and the port from showing through the cloth. It is, of course, necessary to paint all edges of these speaker openings.

Should an ebony finish be desired for the top, this same dye and shellac may be

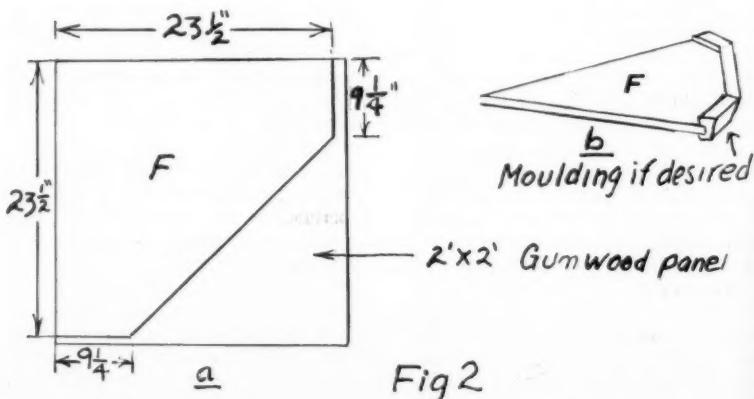


Fig 2

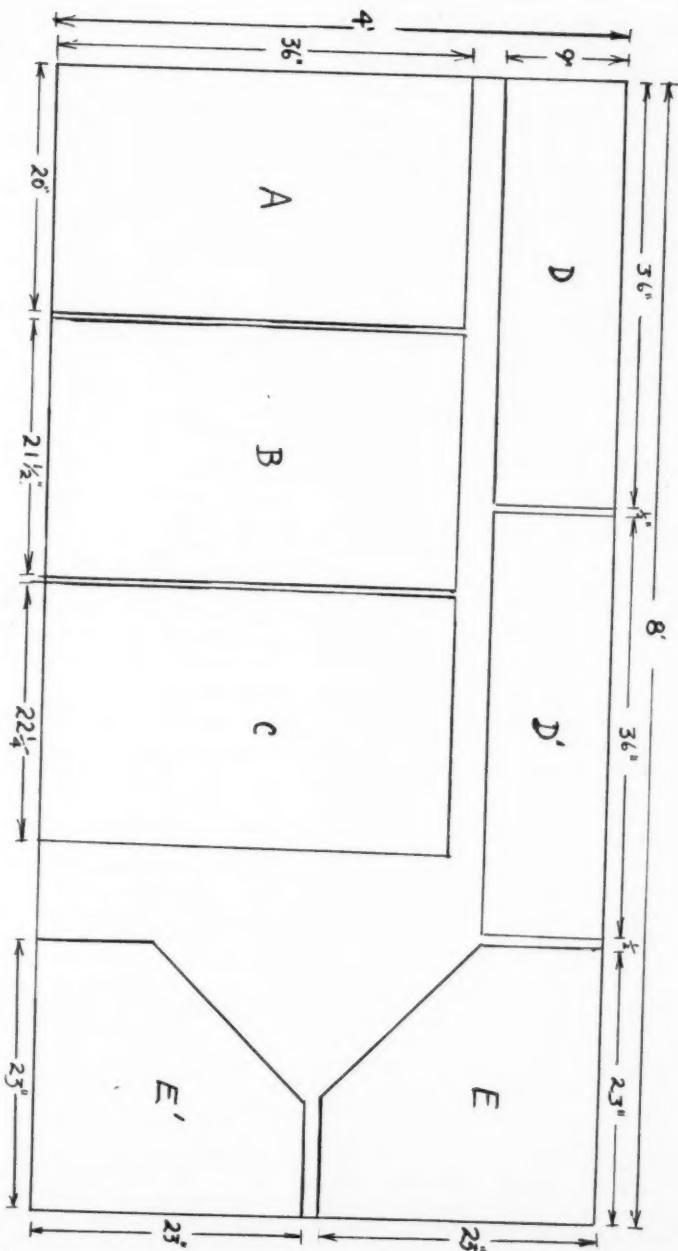


Fig. 3

used. Rub down each coat with steel wool. The last coat should be rubbed with automobile rubbing compound for a high gloss.

Construction

First make your layout on the $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 4" by 8" fir panel (see Fig. 3). It is advisable to cut all panels $\frac{1}{2}$ " larger than necessary and to trim them to size later. Fig. 4a and b shows the detail of all pieces required for the cabinet proper, except the top F discussed below. Note that two sides of Panel A are cut at an angle of 23° and that one side each of D and D¹ are at the same angle. (Mathematically $22\frac{1}{2}^\circ$ would be correct, but experience has proved that 23° makes for tighter joints.)

After all the parts are cut as shown, the bass reflex port and the speaker mounting holes must be cut in panel A. The layout is for the Wharfedale 15" woofer and 10" middle frequency speakers, which I recommend. The 5" Wharfedale tweeter is not mounted on the panel. It will be discussed later. The loudspeaker must be bolted to the panel by means of flat head 2" by 3/16" nuts and bolts. Be sure to countersink the heads. All screw holes are marked and should be drilled accurately and then countersunk as shown. Save all the leftover pieces of paneling as these will be used in the tweeter section to be described in the next article. Next the 1" by 2" and 2" by 2" reinforcements must be cut (Fig. 4b). Parts Nos. 1 and 2 are cut at an angle of 45° . Incidentally, when ordering 1" by 2" and 2" by 2" lumber do not be surprised at the size you receive. The so-called 1" by 2" lumber is approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ " by $1\frac{3}{4}$ " and the other is similarly trimmed down. This is the reason that the reinforcing pieces Nos. 6, 6¹, 7, 7¹, 8, 8¹, 9 and 9¹ are not marked as to size. They must be cut-fitted by the builder as construction goes along (see Fig. 5). All parts must be glued and tightly screwed into place. Care should be taken to make air tight joints. There are two parts that are not glued into place. The first is panel C, which must remain removable so that the speaker units are accessible. This is fastened by means of screws. The second is the finished top F

which is attached by means of three screws from below panel E (see Fig. 5). This makes it possible to change the grill cloth if a loudspeaker has to be changed.

Order of Assembly

Attach parts 1 and 3 to D and 2 and 4 to D. Attach Panel A to D and D¹. Next screw the unit (A and D and D¹) to E (bottom). Attach post 5 to panel B and assemble with A, D, D¹ and E. Cut 1" by 2" reinforcements to size (6, 6¹, 7, 7¹, 8, 8¹, 9, 9¹) and attach by means of screws. Next attach top E, then attach kick plate. Nail chicken wire for cement lining to E, E¹, D, D¹, and B on inside. Make trough on C and nail chicken wire. Apply cement. Paint entire unit black; mount odspeaker units, mount grill cloth. Line inside with rock wool. Attach top and panel C. (After the cement has been applied and the loudspeakers mounted, the box must be lined with a sound absorbent material such as rock wool. This should be nailed to the 1" by 2" inside the box. A curtain of this should also be hung from E across the inside of the box to the bottom as close as possible to the loudspeakers. Rock wool should also be tacked to panel C.)

Other Loudspeaker Units

Although this enclosure is designed for the three Wharfedale units mentioned other units can be used with excellent results. Listed below are some of the possibilities. In all cases a high grade 15" whoofer with low cone resonance (below 40 cps) is recommended.

Single 15" wide range unit. Will give good results but at least a tweeter is recommended to be used with it. Omit cutout for middle frequency speaker.

15" coaxial or triaxial unit. Will give excellent results. Omit cutout for middle speaker and raise position of 15" cutout for better high frequency reproduction.

15" woofer and compression driver (crossover around 600 cycles). This gives bright response of highs. A level control (a 50 ohm wirewound potentiometer is all right, but a 5 watt 16-ohm L pad is preferable) is absolutely necessary be-

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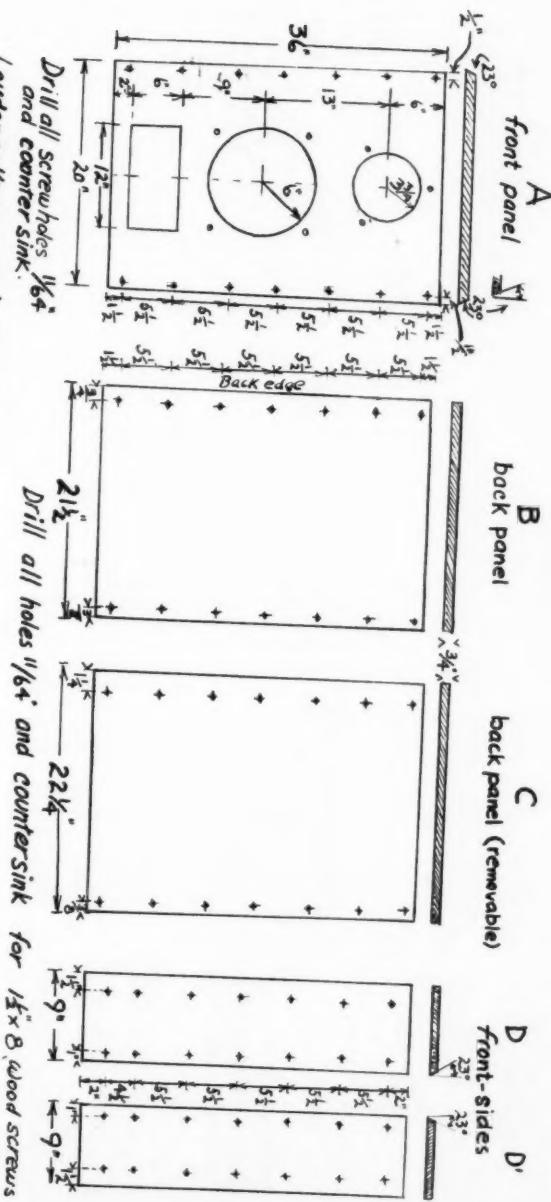


Fig. 4(a)

Kick plate

Fig 5

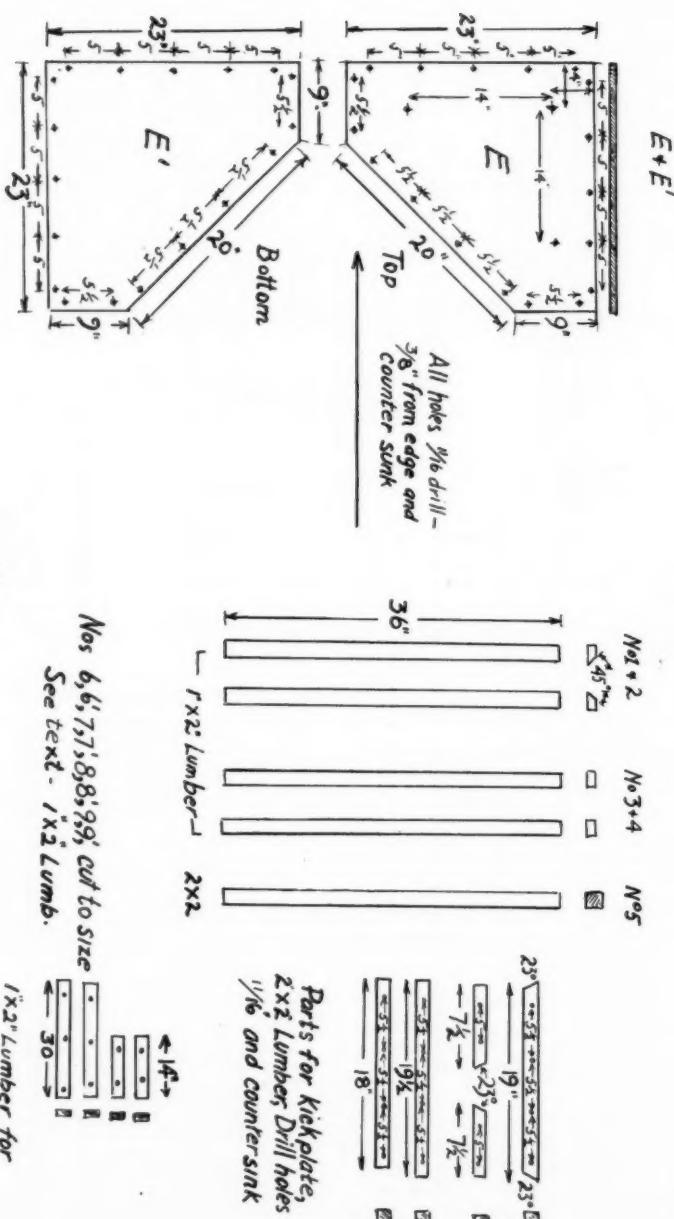
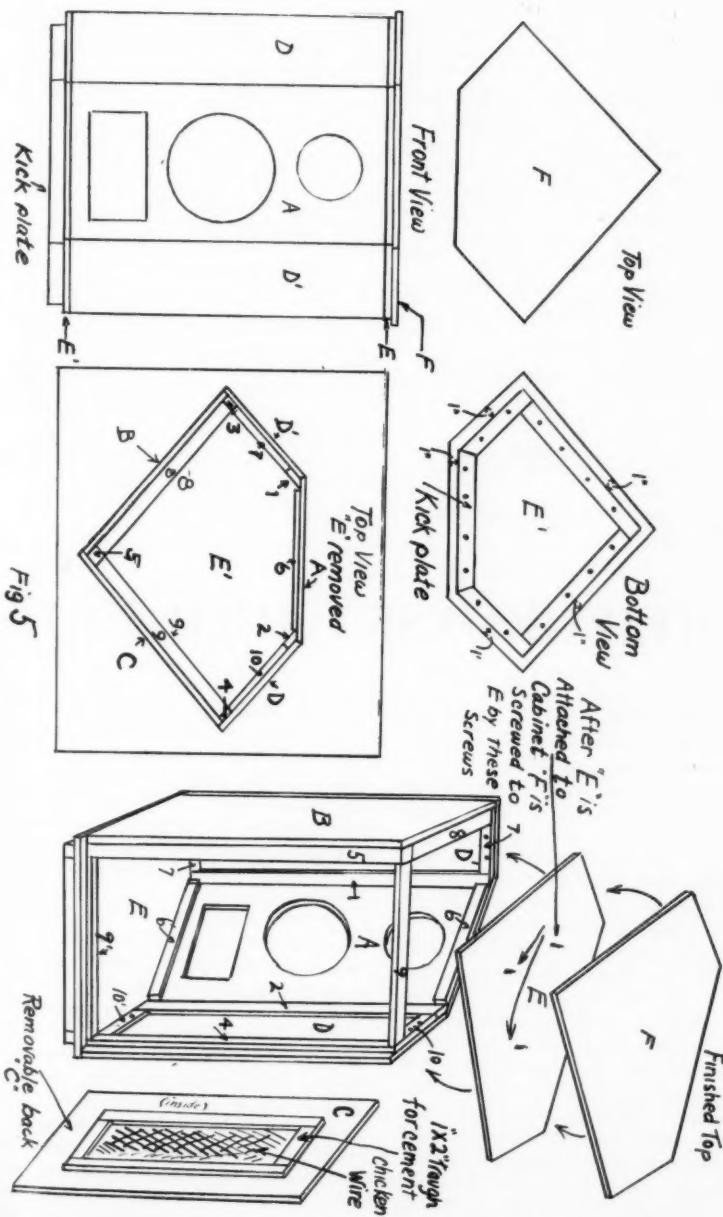


Fig 4(b)



cause these speakers are more efficient than cone type woofers and cannot be balanced otherwise. Substitute units in the place allotted to 10" Wharfedale, making proper cutout.

A Three-way System, utilizing 15" woofer, middle frequency and high frequency compression driver. All remarks above apply. Each compression driver must have a level control. All units must be mounted on Panel A.

When using any speaker combination, it is best to have units with the same impedance, otherwise it will be difficult to match them to the crossover network.

List of Materials

- One $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 4" by 8" fir panel.
- One piece $\frac{3}{4}$ " by 2' by 2' No. 1 pine.
- 45 feet 1" by 2" no. 1 pine.
- 15 feet 2" by 2" no. 1 pine.
- 1 gross $1\frac{1}{4}$ by 8 flathead steel wood screws.
- 15 pieces $2\frac{1}{4}$ by 8 flathead steel wood screws.

- 12 flathead steel nuts and bolts (3/16 by 2") and washers.
- 1 pint of glue—casio or any equivalent wood glue.
- 1 quart of white shellac.
- 1 small box of black analine dye powder.
- 1½ yards monks cloth 40" wide (or other cloth).
- 25 lbs. ready mix cement.
- 2 yards 1" mesh chicken wire
- 5 sheets of 2" rock wool.

* * *

The next article will describe the construction of the high frequency unit, and of the crossover network. Also, final adjustment of the bass reflex port and phasing of the speaker will be described. I regret that I will not be able to answer any letters concerning the project personally. However, any question of universal interest I may take up in these pages.

A TCHAIKOVSKY ORIGINAL

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Swan Lake Ballet* (Complete Original Score); Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Antal Dorati. Mercury LP set (3 discs) OL-3-102, \$14.94.

IT is a rare occasion when one hears for the first time a complete score almost three-quarters of a century after its *première*, especially when portions of the score have during that time been made familiar by countless performances. But that is the situation; and this stunning new recording probably represents the American *première* of Tchaikovsky's complete *Swan Lake*. By complete, one means the original score that the composer prepared for the Bolshoi Theatre production of 1877; and not the famous version made familiar by the tremendous St. Petersburg production of 1895. This latter version was, as you undoubtedly know, choreographed by Marius Petipa and his younger

associate Lev Ivanov. The full score was rearranged (as far as the order of the numbers go) by Drigo, a conductor of the Maryinsky Imperial Ballet (remembered for his cloying *Valse Bluette*). Certain passages from the original were dropped, bits were added from other Tchaikovsky compositions and from what seems to be Drigo's work.

It is, of course, a distinct pleasure to have for the first time Tchaikovsky's full conception of *Swan Lake*. For those who, as your reviewer, find in the Tchaikovsky ballet scores his most endearing work and consider them among the peaks of the 19th-century musical literature, this recording is a cause for rejoicing (if for no other reason than it adds in quantitative and qualitative fashion to the total output). It is rather like finding a few diamonds in a hidden compartment of a treasure chest whose jewels one has continually admired and loved. However, as far as theater

The American Record Guide

goes, the arrangement of the original score of 29 numbers compared with the St. Petersburg version shows what a brilliant red disposition Drigo accomplished. Can one imagine a third act without the *Black Swan Pas de Deux* (in the original, its music is in the first act)?

I bring up this point for more than one reason. This new album, handsomely bound in silk and full of splendid photographs, contains a plot of the St. Petersburg *Swan Lake*; but the musical numbers are of the original version and these numbers are dropped into the written plot sequence in a consequently puzzling manner. When the annotator, Walter Terry, dance critic of *The New York Herald Tribune*, writes about the demonic power of Odile, the Black Swan's 32 fouettes in the third act, he is concerned with the *Scene (No. 24)*. But this music will be found in the *Pas de Deux* (original score No. 5 in the first act). The sequence of Terry's description of the second act plot is also out of order with the original musical numbers. Now, you may ask with good reason why Terry did not give us instead the plot with the original production's musical sequence. The fact is that probably no one knows exactly what it was like or how it went. Certainly from 1877 to 1883, the Bolshoi production (choreography by Julius Reisinger) underwent change after change; it is said that by 1883 one-third of Tchaikovsky's music had been replaced by music of other composers. In any event, Terry has left the reader confused. He certainly could have made the sequence of plot and music clearer than it will be for most interested persons.

There is only one way to compare the Dorati-Minneapolis performance with other recordings of *Swan Lake*: that is to compare versions of commonly played numbers. On this basis, one must say it is a toss-up between the new recording and the London LP set (2 discs) which features the London Symphony under Anatole Fistoulari. For Dorati is completely effective in the brilliant dances and in the creation of the appropriate theatre excitement, and Fistoulari moves one in the lyrical passages (particularly in Act 2).

May, 1955

Choosing between the recordings is difficult, but one must finally take Mercury, I believe, for its unusual distinctness of timbre and its illusion of faithful dynamic shading. This new recording is, to these ears, the finest Mercury has accomplished in Minneapolis, and the whole presentation is something to be proud of. To complete its project of giving us the complete, great Tchaikovsky ballet scores, however (Mercury has already made available a fine *Nutcracker*), we must have the *Sleeping Beauty*.

—C.J.L.

OPERA SPOTLIGHT

LEONCAVALLO: *Pagliacci* (Opera in two acts); Maria Callas (Nedda), Giuseppe di Stefano (Canio), Tito Gobbi (Tonio), Nicola Monte (Beppe), Rolando Panerai (Silvio), Orchestra and Chorus of La Scala, Milan, Tullio Serafin (Cond.). Angel set 3527 (3 sides), \$8.98.

▲LIKE all great ladies of the theater, Maria Callas can steal the show on occasion and that is what she does here. For di Stefano is hardly a Canio in spirit, even though he sings all the notes with assurance and goes through the prescribed emotions. Only Tito Gobbi stands up to Callas as Tonio, making his characterization as vivid and real as she does hers. What a scene between Nedda and Tonio in the first act; there's none like it on records. Some will remember Gobbi's Tonio in the Italian film, where he proved himself one of the great singing actors of our time. Though he does not have the height for the *A flat* in the *Prologue*, one forgets this fact as the opera goes on. There have been other great baritones who omitted this high note which the composer did not originally place in his score. The best of the Canios are Gigli, del Monaco and Bjoerling, but of the three del Monaco gives the most telling performance since his vocal equipment is best suited to the

role. Callas makes a vibrant Nedda and her singing, except for a few awkward moments in the *Ballatella*, remains consistently thrilling. The orchestral direction of Tullio Serafin is dramatic and even melodramatic—in the final scene, just the way the patrons of La Scala like their *Pagliacci* music played. The characteristic, excellent qualities of a La Scala recording are present. —J.N.

RAVEL: *L'Enfant et les Sortilèges*; Flore Wend (The Child), Marie Lise de Montmellin (The Mother, The China Cup, The Dragon Fly), Geneviève Touraine (The Shepherdess, The She-Cat, The Bat), Adrienne Migliette (The Fire, The Nightingale), Suzanne Dance (The Princess, The Squirrel), Juliette Bise (The Owl, A Shepherd), Giselle Bobillier (A Shepherdess), Hugues Cuenod (The Wedgewood Teapot, The Little Old Man, The Green Frog), Pierre Mollet (The Grandfather Clock, The Armchair), Lucien Lovane (A Tree), with the Motet Choir of Geneva and Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LL 1180, \$3.98.

▲THIS happy union of Ravel's musical super-artistry with the delicate poetry of Colette must remain one of the glories of 20th French opera, though its chances of performance even in France are minimized by the difficulty of mounting its utter fantasy. By means of records, however, this problem is overcome, and in this form the work transports extremely well. This is the second successful recording we have had available in this country. All things considered, it is easily the better of the two, for it has Ansermet at the helm—and who is so well equipped as he for just this kind of music?—and it has wonderfully balanced recording, which the aging Columbia version can hardly claim. As for the singers, as a group they may miss something of the *élan* of their predecessors, but they are by no means inferior. Miss Wend is less childish of voice than Miss Sautureau, but her richer instrument is also young and fresh, and she plays

the character well. Danco is right for the Princess, and she sings some of the loveliest passages in the score with sincere beauty and style, yet she just misses the warmth of Angelici's appeal. But the final ensemble is so magnificently realized that one cannot really regret the older recording. Only some obtrusive surface noise detracted from my pleasure in the disc.—P.L.M.

ROSSINI: *La Cenerentola* (Opera in 2 Acts); Alda Noni (Clorinda), Fernanda Cadoni (Tisbe), Marina de Gabarain (Angelina), Hervey Alan (Alidoro), Ian Wallace (Don Magnifico), Juan Oncina (Don Ramiro), Sesto Bruscantini Dandini, Glydebourne Festival Orchestra and Chorus, Vittorio Gui (cond.). RCA Victor LHMV-600, 2 discs, \$9.98.

▲ROSSINI'S *Cinderella*, based on a variant of the fairy tale in which the fairy and the glass slipper are dispensed with, was written in 1817 a year after *The Barber*, which it rivalled in popularity over a long period. If posterity has not found it quite as diverting as *The Barber*, it still remains a delightful opera. The pattern is much the same as in *The Barber* with difficult florid pieces for Angelina (Cenrentola) and her Prince (Don Ramiro) and patter arias and other set pieces for the others. Some have probably become acquainted with this score through the Cetra recording, which boasts two more persuasive singers in the leading roles—Simionato and Valetti. Marina de Gabarain has a rich contralto and the flexibility to do justice to Rossini's difficult music, yet she does not sing the *fioritura* passages with the smoothness or ease of Giulietta Simionato nor vary as successfully the mood changes in her characterization. Juan Oncina's light tenor is less rewarding than Cesare Valetti's, but he acquires himself on the whole credibly.

The balance of the cast are first-rate and because of Vittorio Gui's obviously better rehearsed orchestral direction they are heard to better advantage than their counterparts in the Cetra set. This being

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a Glyndebourne Festival production, it is not surprising that it is a more polished performance. Moreover, there is more of the score with inclusion of requisite recitatives to retain the continuity of the story, some of which were omitted in the Cetra offering. It is not a complete performance, as stated on the cover, since it has become the custom in modern times to cut down the recitatives and omit some arias to step the action up. Undoubtedly, this is the way that the opera was presented at Glyndebourne. The recording is far finer than Cetra's, better balanced and more brilliant. While admirers of Simionato may be reluctant to part with the older set, there is no doubt in my mind that acquisition of this new one will find them playing it oftener than its predecessor.

—P.H.R.

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SMETANA: *Dalibor* (Opera in 3 Acts); Václav Bednář (Vladislav), Beno Blachut (Dalibor), Theodor Srubar (Budivoj), Karel Kalas (Jailer), Antonín Votava (Vítěk), Maria Podvolová Milada), Stefa Petrová (Jitka), Chorus and Orchestra of the Prague National Theatre, Jaroslav Krombholc (cond.) Supraphone discs SLPLV-98/99/100, \$5.75 each.

▲ **DALIBOR** has been called "a great tragic opera, a Czech *Fidelio*." Its story, —derived from Bohemian legend, is said to be, "symbolic both of the temperament and national destiny of the Czechs." Dalibor, a half-legendary hero, is at war with the Burgrave of Ploskovice since the latter has captured the minstrel Zdenek and put him to death by impalement. When the opera opens, Dalibor has taken the town of the Burgrave and revenged Zdenek's death by killing the Burgrave. Dalibor, says Rosa Newmarch, "is the type of liberator, fearless leader, and loyal friend, dear to the Czechs. He is not afraid to defy even the king himself in defense of the peasant's rights. Therefore he is seized and brought to trial, and condemned to perpetual imprisonment." His accuser, the Burgrave's

May, 1955

sister Milada, falls in love with him, and later disguised as a boy comes to him in prison after arranging for his escape. But the king learns of the plot and Milada is mortally wounded when seeking to rescue the knight and dies in his arms. The latter, loathe to leave his loved one is attacked by Budivoj, Commander of the Castle Guards, and slain. As an operatic plot, it has its weaknesses typical of its period (1867). Its entire structure, musically, says Mrs. Newmarch, "may be said to be based on one motive with variants that characterize the changing actions and moods of the chief protagonists and an infinite variety of lesser members which serve to link the musical imagery into a whole." This motive appears in the opera soon after the opening fanfare. The orchestration has been rightly praised by Czech writers, though it lacks some of the vigor of the composer's *Ma Vlast*. Strength it has at the right moments, and passion and tenderness. And Smetana wrote gratefully for the voices. The recording is not quite up to our modern Western operatic outputs. It is not always well balanced but it serves its purpose, and few hearing this opera for the first time will disagree with the writer that it is a moving experience.

The singers bring fervor and passion to their portrayals. The men are excellent. The women convincing but sometimes tonally unsteady. The chorus and orchestra acquit themselves as true patriots, and the conductor also. Czech Supraphone has issued a libretto in Czech and English to accompany the records in sales outside of Czechoslovakia.

Smetana wrote this opera two years after his popular *Bartered Bride*, largely as an answer to refute the critics who had accused him of imitating Wagner and "of betraying the ideal of national music." *Dalibor*, like *Ma Vlast*, has become a musical work of equal national significance in its native land. —P.H.R.

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WOLF-FERRARI: *Il segreto di Susanna* (Opera in 1 Act); Giuseppe Valdengo (Count Gil), Elena Rizzieri (Countess

(Continued on page 294)

291



Pierre Monteux reading a score between recording sessions in an RCA-Victor control studio.

RECORD COLLECTORS

are talking about...

. . . **Giuletta Simionato**, judging from letters received, several of which pointed out to us that we had neglected to mention her recording of the Vivaldi *Stabat Mater* (Colosseum CLPS 1050) in which the expressivity and smoothness of her singing make her performance of this beautiful work an ennobling experience. For some reason, the sponsors of this record neglected to send it for review. Also included on this disc are performances of Frescobaldi's appropriately named *Toccata per l'Elevazioni* for organ, and Monteverdi's *Laetatus sum*, a setting of the 72nd Psalm—the latter sung by chorus with the Orchestra Romana da Caimera della "Societa del Quartetto," conducted by Gino Nucci. The same orchestra and conductor are heard in the *Stabat Mater*, which is in every way a preferable performance to an earlier release. Moreover, the recorded sound here is unusually good for its source. These performances were originally Radio Vaticana productions.

. . . **Pierre Monteux**, who celebrated his eightieth birthday in April. Monteux began his career at Paris as violist at the Opera-Comique in the middle 1890s, became founder and director of the Concerts Berlioz after the run of the century and in 1911 conductor of the Diaghilev Russian Ballet, with which he performed for the first time Stravinsky's *Petrouchka*, *Le Sacre du Printemps* and *Rossignol*, Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloe* and Debussy's *Jeux*. In 1913-14, he conducted at the Paris Opera, and later in 1914 founded the Société des Concerts Populaires in Paris. After this, he conducted opera at London's Covent Garden, and also in Berlin, Vienna and other European cities. He toured the United States with the Russian Ballet in 1916-17, later conducted the Civic Orchestra Society in New York and in 1917-18 was with the Metropolitan Opera. From 1919-1924, he was conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, after which he was guest conductor of the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, and from 1928 to 1935 conductor of the Paris Symphony Orchestra. In 1935, he became conductor of the San Francisco Orchestra, a post he held until a few years back. His guest performances with other noted American orchestras are too numerous to recount. The late Boston critic, H. T. Parker, called Monteux a visualist, a musician with an openness of mind, with an eager, assimilating curiosity from which "spring programs that in catholicity of choice, range forward and backward. . . Mr. Monteux excels with music dependent for impression upon play of rhythm and vibrancy of color, music also of romantic content or dramatic movement. . . he is equally eloquent with classics. . . he brings warm feeling and sensitive ear to instrumental melody. . . It is not Mr. Monteux's way to blaze for a day; he prefers the steady, the cumulative glow." To cite his many fine performances on Victor records would occupy considerable space, suffice it to say many listeners prefer his performance of the Franck *Symphony*, with its lyrical sensitivity and avoidance of undue heroics that others bring to this work, and there are those who contend that his is the most illuminating performance of *Le Sacre du Printemps*—that he alone coordinates the shifting rhythmic play of the second part in a manner that does not create a sense of "intolerable strain." Stravinsky has said that "most conductors are inclined to cope with the metric difficulties of these passages in such cavalier fashion as to distort

alike my music and my intention," but not Monteux. Monteux's performances of Beethoven's *Second* and *Fourth Symphonies* are rightfully rated among the best extant, and his performance of the Brahms' *Second* is a cherishable one bearing out Mr. Parker's assertion that Monteux's "is a luminous rather than a rugged and abrupt" approach to Brahms. His recent performances with the Boston Symphony Orchestra of Delibes *Sylvia* and *Coppelia* are appealing for their suavity and style and wonderfully recorded. So much by this beloved Maestro are today dated recordings, which is a pity. RCA Victor should have him redo his fine performances of the Berlioz *Symphony Fantastique*, the d'Indy *Symphony in B flat*, the *Symphony on a Mountain Air* and the *Istar Variations*, and also Debussy's *Images for Orchestra* and the Ravel *La Valse*, all of which are lacking in the relished sonic values of our time.

(Continued from page 291)

Susanna), Orchestra of Radiotelevisione Italiana, Turin, Angelo Questa (cond.), Cetra A-1250, \$4.98. **THE SAME** Mario Bariello (Count Gil), Ester Orel (Countess Susanna), Turin Symphony Orchestra, Alfredo Simonetti (cond.), Decca DL-9770, \$4.98.

▲WOLF-FERRARI's *The Secret of Suzanne*, written in 1911, has a slim story all about a lady of refinement who surreptitiously indulges in smoking perfumed cigarettes in her husband's absence and his suspecting her of infidelity, which inspired its composer to write some charming lyrical music. The plot seems always to tempt critics to undervalue the score, in which the composer has shown an exceptional ingenuity. There is more than a modicum of lyrical charm and technical skill in Wolf-Ferrari's workmanship, which once incited critics to acclaim him as a 20th-century Mozart. The opera was first given at the Metropolitan in the season of 1912-13 with Farrar and Scotti and again in 1921-22 with Bori and Scotti. In all, it had eleven performances. The plot

today may be regarded as sadly dated, but the music still retains its charm and freshness. At long last, we have a recorded version of this little operatic gem—or rather two versions, for hard on the heels of the Cetra release of last month comes a Decca release. Both derive from Italy, the first from the famous Italian radio and television center in Turin and the second from a recording made by Deutsche Grammophon in the same city. Both are studio jobs with the honors going to Cetra for the clearer recording and balance between singers and orchestra. Both performances have their attributes though I favor the Cetra for the fluency and brilliance of the orchestral playing. The singers are expert in their parts though variable in artistry. Decca's Barriello tends to overact the role of the Count while Cetra's Valdengo employs his fine voice to better results. Ester Orel has a fuller voice than Elena Rizzieri, who sings too open on her high tones, but she is the smoother singer of the two.

—P.H.R.

(Continued from page 280)

that the electronic resources of this instrument are exploited with remarkable results in *Fantasy in Space*. Bell sonorities and the human voice are given the treatment in *Incantation*. The conventional devices of canon, augmentation, diminution and the like are worked into a highly complex pattern in the *Invention in Twelve Notes*. Acoustic relationships, the overtone series in particular, are studied in *Low Speed*. And the piano is put to uses you never imagined in *Sonic Contours*. The trouble with reviewing this experimental material in so brief a space is that about all one can do is inculcate an interest on the reader's part, and lest there be any misunderstanding I herewith strongly urge all to expose themselves to this disc. I found it an exciting experience and I know that others will, no matter their predilections. Music history always has to be going somewhere, after all, and it may very well be that Luening and Ussachevsky have found a path to the future. Who can say them nay?

—J.L.

The American Record Guide

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Notes and Reviews

THREE IS IN SOULS *a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs or martial, brisk or grave; some chord in unison with what we hear is touched within us, and the heart replies.*

—William Cowper

ORCHESTRA

BEETHOVEN: *Symphony No. 6 in F, Op. 68 ("Pastoral")*; the Detroit Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Paray. Mercury LP MG-50045, \$4.98.

▲LIKE the same conductor's *Seventh*, this *Sixth* is a beautifully wrought, rather personal interpretation, tending to some fast tempi but always well within the bounds of good taste. Paray is an immensely gifted musician and his performances are unfailingly interesting. To me, at least, they are also rewarding. Those who incline to the traditional German conception of this work might do themselves the favor of hearing it in this somewhat more sunny setting; Paray reveals facets of Beethoven that somehow escape his more single-minded competitors. The Detroit ensemble is not the finest orchestra in the land by a long shot and there are times when the Mercury sound is slightly too magnificent for its own good. But the music-making is of a very high order and I do not hesitate to recommend your sampling this disc before choosing your *Pastoral*. Myself, I am adding this one to my library, but Kleiber, Toscanini and von Karajan have each of them virtues that are not to be gainsaid. —J.L.

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BRITTEN: *Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra*; **SAINT-SAENS:** *Le Carnaval des Animaux*; Peter Pears (narrator), Geza Anda and Bela Siki (pianos) and May, 1955

the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Igor Markevitch. Angel LP 35135, \$4.98.

▲BALLET folk—those, at least, who have seen the New York City Center company's production of *Fanfare*—will find nothing incongruous about the presence of a narrator in the Britten, because that is the way it is given in the balletic theater. Indeed, that is the way it was designed to be given, as anyone can confirm by consulting the standard score. That I happen to abominate *Fanfare* has nothing to do with my preference for Britten's music by itself, *sans* the spoken commentary. Furthermore, the van Beinum performance is considerably cleaner overall, and to these ears a better recording job. For purposes of music "appreciation," of course, this new version is just what the doctor ordered. The interpolations by Peter Pears are free of any mannerism beyond the exotic appeal of his fine English accent. Too, there is no gainsaying the "appreciation" value of the coupling; to these ears the posthumously published *Carnaval des Animaux* is the most effective "thin edge of the wedge" ever devised for juvenile consumption. The nursery-like cover design suggests that this album was in fact contrived for kiddies, and I can imagine no better gift for any musical youngster. The Anda-Siki collaboration is scintillating, I must report, and Markevitch elicits wonderful good humor from the Philharmonia. Also, the sound is superb—although that of the domestic Capitol version is, too, and its pairing with the

Ibert *Divertissement* may attract slightly more sophisticated listeners. —J.L.

DVORAK: *Concerto in B minor, Op. 104.* Pierre Fournier ('cello), Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Rafael Kubelik. London LL1106, \$3.98.

DVORAK: *Concerto in B minor, Op. 104.* André Navarra ('cello), New Symphony Orchestra of London conducted by Rudolph Schwarz. Capitol P8301, \$4.98.

▲ANY performance of this *Cello Concerto* must inevitably be compared with the famous pre-war version by Pablo Casals and the Czech Philharmonic Orchestra under George Szell's masterful direction re-issued as Victor LCT-1026). That version set the standard by which all renditions may be judged for years to come. Each of the new versions has much to recommend it. The Vienna Philharmonic directed by Rafael Kubelik emits gorgeous sounds that have been stunningly recorded. The balance between the soloist and the orchestra is excellent. The same holds true of the Capitol release, although here there seems to be greater clarity in the individual instruments of the orchestra. Fournier gives a truly poetic performance, but throughout the first movement, one wishes there were a bit more force or vigor in his playing, while he is not exactly relaxed, there is a lack of true intensity. On the other hand, Navarra gives a polished, forceful performance that invites comparison with the Czech recording of Casals. There is refinement here, but not at the expense of the music. Navarra seems to enter more into the Czech spirit of the music than Fournier, with the result that his performance may be recommended without reservation. In my estimation, the best performance is still the Casals, and the sound, although not "hi-fi" by any means, is still realistic enough to be more than merely satisfactory. —R.H.R.

ELGAR: *Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61;* Alfredo Campoli and London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by

Sir Adrian Boult. London LL-1168, \$3.98.

▲FIVE years ago, Victor released a performance of this concerto by Heifetz and Sargent. At the time, I praised Heifetz's performance for its lustrous tone and amazing technique which was not exploited for its own sake. Yet, I expressed a regret that the Menuhin-Elgar performance, which dated from 1932, had been replaced. Of all previous performances to this one, my favorite was always the Sammons-Wood one which preceded the Menuhin-Elgar by a number of years. Elgar seemed to linger over much of his music more than Wood, and in the case of the slow movement, marked *Andante*, his adopted tempo was closer to an *Adagio*. Heifetz and Sargent cut this down a third, whereas Campoli and Boult strike a middle course. I think Campoli and Boult are closer to the *nobilmente* of Elgar's music, and they unite to give a cherishable performance which makes us more aware of the heart of the music. This is music close to the hearts of the English and no one is better qualified to give a decision on the merits of this performance than an English reviewer. Hence, I would like to quote from the review by D. S. in *The Gramophone* for April since I concur with the writer's summations. "Campoli has successfully renovated this imposing Edwardian piece without destroying its essential contours; he brings new life to it without seeking to stamp out the old, as I fear Heifetz did in his streamlined performance." It is a point well taken. And later, he says, "I like Campoli's insistence on the filigree beauty of the passage-work, rather than on its purely virtuoso features. Much of the violin part is, after all, essentially decorative, and it was written before the days when fingered octaves had snob value." London engineers have done a notable job here; the recording is rich and full in sound; the solo instrument is perfectly balanced in relation to the orchestra. As a recording, this is decidedly an advancement over the Victor one.

—P.H.R.

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FALLA: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain*; **RODRIGO:** *Concierto de Aranjuez*; Gonzalo Soriano (piano) (in the Falla) and Narciso Yepes (guitar) (in the Rodrigo) with the Madrid Chamber Orchestra, Ataulfo Argenta (cond.) London International TW-91019, \$4.98.

FALLA: *Nights in the Gardens of Spain; Homages*; Aldo Ciccolini (piano) (in the first) Orchestre National de la Radiodiffusion Francaise, Ernesto Halffter (cond.). Angel 35134, \$4.98.

▲IN the realm of 20th-century music, there is no other work of poetic evocation quite like de Falla's rhapsodic nocturnes. In the past, we have had several performances that were beautifully played, notably those by Curzon and Novaes, but the performance from Soriano and Argenta evokes a magic of its own unlike any performance I have ever heard. And sound-wise, it is extraordinarily beautiful as well as realistic. To describe the infinite rhythmic subtleties that Argenta achieves, the wondrous effects like the climax of the opening movement, cannot equal or approximate one's listening experience. The Ciccolini-Halffter performance is especially praiseworthy from the conductor's work, but less so for the pianist's, who does not have the subtle feeling for the music that Soriano has. Moreover, the French orchestra lacks the richness of sound of the Madrid one, though it is equally well recorded. Yet, both discs have their values to attract the buyer. The Angel one, with de Falla's tributes to Arbós, Debussy, Dukas and Pedrell cannot be overlooked, for all these works express, as the annotator says, an extraordinarily strong personality in music. Rodrigo's *Concierto for Guitar* is of lighter weight than de Falla's music but nonetheless diverting. To admirers of the guitar, it will be a must since it performed by a gifted player who seems to derive from the Segovia school.

—P.H.R.

■ **HOVHANESS:** *Khaldis* (Concerto for Piano, Four Trumpets and Percussion); *Pastorale No. 1; Fantasy on an Ossetin Tune; Orbit No. 2; Jhala; Hymn to a*

298

Celestial Musician; Achlamar; William Masselos (piano) and a chamber ensemble conducted by Izler Solomon. MGM LP E-3160, \$3.98.

▲EITHER you like Hovhaness or you do not, and no two ways about it, because everything he has written for years has come out sounding like everything else he has written for years. I say this neither in scorn nor in pity, because I do like Hovhaness. Moreover, I grant the obvious fact that, aside from the variety of his ensembles, there is an infinite subtle variety in his tonal spectrum, much as there is in a fine Oriental rug. But most fine Oriental rugs are woven from the same materials and come out looking rather alike, do they not? Thus with Hovhaness, which is all right by me in relatively small doses—the elapsed time of one microgroove side being about right for a single sitting. The analogy between this composer's personal esthetic and Oriental rugs was not strained, I trust. His paternal heritage is Armenian, and it is to the art and the adjuncts of this ancient culture that he has addressed himself for the past two decades. That his music of this period evokes the East more than the West is therefore not surprising. Nothing about it is surprising, really, except that one hears something new each time, so myriad are its impulses. All of these generalities apply to the collection at hand, the programmatic constituents of which are amply detailed in the jacket notes. Suffice it to commend the curious to this disc without reservation. The performances are persuasive and presumably authentic, since the composer no doubt was consulted. The sound is high hi-fi.

—J.L.

● **MENOTTI:** *Sebastian—Ballet Suite*; **GOULD:** *Dance Variations*; Members of the NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Leopold Stokowski in the former; in the latter Arthur Whitemore and Jack Lowe (pianos) and the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, also conducted by Stokowski. RCA Victor LP LM-1858, \$3.98.

▲WELL it's about time that *Sebastian* were brought to LP. Menotti may be

The American Record Guide

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God's gift to the lyric theater but I have always loved this early ballet score above anything else he has done and it is a belated pleasure to welcome it to microgroove. Stokowski's performance is sensitive and loving, and the San Franciscans really outdo themselves. The Gould piece leaves me cold but there is no writing off its skill and certainly it is engaging enough. Principally, however, it seems to have been fashioned to demonstrate the hi-fi potentialities of two pianos with orchestra. Clarity of sound is the keynote, and the whole gamut of dynamics is explored with a sure-footedness that is Gould's most substantial claim on our attentions. Whittemore and Lowe, who commissioned the *tour de force* in the first place, play with all of their wonted precision. And of course Stokowski comes through; no conductor has more fun with sonic experiments. —J.L.

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MOZART: *Piano Concerto in E Flat, K. 449*; **R. STRAUSS:** *Burleske*: Friedrich Gulda (piano) and the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Anthony Collins. London LP LL-1158, \$3.98.

▲STRANGE bedfellows indeed, but quite an interpretative challenge for young Gulda. He comes off best in the *Burleske*, which he seems to perceive as the witty, sardonic small talk of a sophisticated contemporary. But so did Elly Ney. Nothing daunted, he applies the same glibness to Mozart with somewhat less artistic results, for this is not superficial music and deftness is not enough to do it justice. Of the competitive versions, the Badura-Skoda is now outdated and the Istomin has all of the advantages and disadvantages of the Perpignan series, which is to say high musicianship but low engineering. Altogether Gulda's version will be acceptable to most listeners, I would say. Collins provides adequate accompaniments, especially in the Strauss, and the recorded sound is superb. —J.L.

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PERCUSSION!: *Concerto for Percussion and Small Orchestra* (Milhaud), *Toccata* May, 1955

for Percussion (Chávez), and *Music for String Instruments, Percussion, and Celesta* (Bartók); Concert Arts Orchestra and Concert Arts Percussionists conducted by Felix Slatkin and (in the Bartók) the Los Angeles Chamber Symphony conducted by Harold Byrns. Capitol LP P-8299, \$4.98.

▲THE Bartók apparently is a re-coupling of the 10-inch disc that has enjoyed currency for two or three years; the recording still stands up on its musical and sonic merits. The Chávez we have had twice already in recent months; this third version is easily as good as the other preferred one on the Boston label, and much more sensibly coupled. Attention focuses on the fascinating Milhaud work, recorded herewith for the first time. It dates from 1930, when the artistic community was beginning to interest itself, rather self-consciously, in the expressive possibilities of African culture. Milhaud never was one to let a fad pass him by. His *Concerto* is a fairly obvious, but also an extremely artful, bow to this particular vogue—which has turned out to be quite an enduring one, at that. As music it falls somewhat below the level of the Bartók, and even of the Chávez. Milhaud is a great man, make no mistake; but his unsurpassed feeling for rhythms was not meant to be paraded in a percussion showpiece. It holds one's interest the first time around, but essentially it is a study *about* percussion, not a study *in* it, which difference lends to the Bartók, at least, its identity as a modern masterwork. The sound throughout is stunning; decibel fiends are advised to secure any nearby glassware. —J.L.

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PROKOFIEV: *Concerto No. 1 in D*; **LALO:** *Symphonie Espagnole*; Nathan Milstein (violin) and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra conducted by Vladimir Golschmann. Capitol LP P-8303, \$4.98.

▲MILSTEIN previously has not been heard to quite such advantage on records. The Prokofiev is one of his specialties. On the present evidence, he now owns the work, Szigeti's memorable interpreta-

tion having preceded high fidelity by too many years. Oistrakh's you can hardly hear through the sonic smog that afflicts his recording. Odnoposoff's was creditable but nowhere in Milstein's class. This latest is not only a magnificent performance; it actually reveals dimensions in the score that one did not suspect. So pellucid is the soloist's traversal, so sympathetic is Golschmann's collaboration, that one hears the work as if one never really heard it before. And the Capitol sound is superb. As to the *Symphonie Espagnole*, I am frank to say that I continue to prefer Campoli's complete version for its truly idiomatic rapport. But Milstein's is silken smooth and quite equal to any of the other competitive issues.

—J.L.

RACHMANINOV: *Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 44; Vocalise, Op. 34, No. 14;* Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia ML-4961, \$3.98.

▲THE Philadelphia Orchestra was the late Rachmaninov's chosen medium with which to perform his works, and he himself recorded this symphony with that orchestra for Victor in 1936. Both Stokowski and Ormandy were associated in recordings with the composer, as the picture on the cover reminds us in Ormandy's case. Though the *Third Symphony* has never attained the popularity of the *Second*, it is nonetheless a work that deserves to be more widely known, for it is more mature, having been written thirty years after the *Second*. "Sombre, lyrical, defiant, it is a work wholly representative of the Slavic genius and of Rachmaninov in particular," as the late Lawrence Gilman has said. Ormandy has always been sympathetic to the music of Rachmaninov and he gives a fine performance of this work. A previous recording from Russia, issued by the Rachmaninov Society, was poorly recorded and roughly performed without the impassioned stress that Ormandy and his superior orchestra achieve. The *Vocalise*, originally for voice and piano, loses some

300

of its charm of restraint in the orchestral version, but it is beautifully played. As a recording, this is rich and glowing in tonal qualities and in its reverberent characteristics exactly right for the music of this composer.

—P.H.R.

RAVEL: *Bolero; La Valse; Pavanne pour une Infante défunte; IBERT: Escalas; DEBUSSY: Clair de lune; CHABRIER: Espana Rhapsodie;* Eugene Ormandy conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra. Columbia ML-4983, \$4.98.

▲WHAT an orchestra this is! Its greatness hardly needs stressing. Rather, the fact that it "is probably the most sensitive orchestra in the world," as Virgil Thomson once said. The recorded sound is always rich and warm and glowing in a Philadelphia recording, but I, for one, would like to hear it recorded in Carnegie Hall where it takes on a lucidity that is missing in its native environment. There is almost too much reverberation for the good of some of this music—*Bolero*, *La Valse* and *Escalas*. Those ear-conditioned to this are less apt to think of anything different. An extended program like this is comparable to a seven course dinner. One feels sated at the end, and a bit blown up. Mr. Ormandy's performances are all music-making of a high order, but they do not efface memories of others. His *Bolero* has a certain formality and a slightly different rhythmic character. His *La Valse* is luscious in sound but lacking the defining contours of Paray's with its clearer reproduction. His *Escalas* has less of the glamour that Stokowski brings to this music as well as clarity of sound. Even the familiar Chabrier, for all its élan, does not have the same magic as the Ansermet and Beecham performances, and the Ravel *Pavanne*, for all its beauty is too closely allied in memory with Ansermet for an unprejudiced comment from me. Philadelphia fans will certainly want this disc, though its recording loses something in the climaxes, being crowded into such fine grooving. Some of the monitoring, like the end of *La Valse*, is all too obvious.

—P.H.R.

The American Record Guide

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May, 195

SAINT-SAENS: *Symphony No. 3 in A minor, Op. 78*; Arturo Toscanini conducting the NBC Symphony Orchestra with George Crook (organ) and Joseph Kahn (piano). RCA Victor LM-1874, \$3.98.

▲OF this symphony, the Boston critic Philip Hale once said that it "has the finest and most characteristic qualities of the best French music: logical construction, lucidity, frankness, euphony. The workmanship is masterly. There is no hesitation." Of Toscanini's performance, one could appropriately apply Hale's words in part—for it substantiates that "lucidity, frankness, euphony" and lack of hesitation. The interpretation is more classical than romantic, as indeed it should be since Saint-Saëns, for all his Gallic qualities, was a keen student of classic traditions. There is just reason for the admiration of Munch's impassioned performance, but Toscanini's fervor is equally impressive with its dramatic impact and its greater suavity and elegance. The performance, taken from the broadcast of November 15, 1952, with its vitality and emotional surge, makes it hard to believe that the noted Maestro was in his eighties, for it has a youthful enthusiasm that belies its conductor's years. The recording is excellent; startlingly realistic in the final pages with the booming tympani. —P.H.R.

17th and 18th CENTURY ITALIAN MUSIC: *Concerto in E for Violin & Strings (Il Riposo)* (Vivaldi); *La Follia* (Corelli-Geminiani); *Concerto à Quattro in D, No. 2* (Galuppi); *Concerto in D, Op. 11, No. 8*; Società Corelli. RCA Victor LM-1880, \$3.98.

▲THIS conductorless ensemble is one of several organizations, formed in recent years, for the performance of early Italian music, much of which has been in neglect. An admirable group of music-makers, the Società Corelli are not as proficient, in my estimation, as the Virtuosi di Roma, which has the guidance of a skilled conductor. Slight tonal deviations and a tendency to punctuate the phrases prevail yet the overall effect

May, 1955

of the performances are musically persuasive and soundwise beautiful. An earlier recording of Vivaldi's gracious concerto (Cetra 50022), with the gifted violinist Armando Gramegna and conductor Renato Fasano, has its attributes but not the wonderful reproduction of the present performance. Geminiani, a pupil of Corelli, may well have had his teacher's endorsement of the present transcription of *La Follia* (a set of variations originally for violin and continuo, based on a Spanish theme) which has long been regarded as one of the most important works of the Baroque Italian school. The Galuppi is a delightful opus full of fresh and attractive melodies. Bonporti (born 1660) has been an unjustly neglected composer. That Bach admired him in his day is sufficient tribute, and well he may judging from this concerto which has considerable melodic beauty, and irresistible spontaneity. All in all this program is one that devotees of early Italian music will welcome. It is brightly and realistically recorded.

—P.H.R.

TAVARES: *Concerto in Brazilian Forms, Op. 105, No. 2*; **PADEREWSKI:** *Fantaisie Polonaise, Op. 19*; Felicia Blumenthal (piano) with the London Symphony Orchestra, Anatole Fistoulari (cond.). London LL-1104, \$3.98.

▲NEITHER of these works is of great importance, but they have qualities which many listeners will probably enjoy. Hekel Tavares is a Brazilian composer who early developed a predilection for folk music, and his concerto is based on "three types of Brazilian folk song, urban, rural and Negro." He is not a great technician but he handles his material in a colorful, vital and generally effective manner. The work has a romantic aura, suggestive of European influences. The Paderewski opus is showy and not without effect, but it only reminds one that its composer was a greater pianist than composer. But there are listeners who like big rhapsodical works with a virtuosic sweep like this one. "The influence of Liszt

coupled with the melodic legacy of Chopin," says the annotator, "would not be denied, least of all by the composer himself." True enough, but Paderewski's music has not survived too well without the glamorous personality of its creator. Not that Felicia Blumenthal does not turn in a brilliant and expressive performance; indeed, she plays both works with a knowing flair for their nationalistic characteristics, being as she is of Polish birth and now a naturalized Brazilian. The recording is excellent, with lovely piano sound. —P.H.R.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto*; **MENDELSSOHN:** *Violin Concerto in E Minor*; Zino Francescatti (violin) and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York conducted by Dimitri Mitropoulos. Columbia LP ML-4965, \$4.98.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Violin Concerto*; **SINDING:** *Suite in A Minor, Op. 10*; **RAVEL:** *Tzigane*; Jascha Heifetz (violin) with the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Walter Suesskind (in the *Concerto*) and otherwise with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Alfred Wallenstein. RCA Victor LP-1832, \$3.98.

▲FRANCESCATTI's performance of the Tchaikovsky is positively electric. That is the only word for it. It sings like one of those high tension wires you sometimes hear in the heat of summer. And he somehow surcharges the Mendelssohn, too, but not with any loss of its more formal properties. That is not to suggest that anything is lost in his Tchaikovsky. To the contrary, he may not have the sugary tone that it invites but he has the ardor that only a fluent French artist can command, and this quality becomes downright galvanic in contact with Russian emotionalism. To say that the Francescatti Tchaikovsky is *the* version would be incorrect; for me the Milstein is preferred, if any. But that is just the point—why must we single out any one approach to a masterwork that has so many avenues of expression? For the moment, Francescatti I find the most ex-

citing, if not the most Tchaikovskyan. And it must be said that Mitropoulos provides a superb accompaniment in both performances. Good Carnegie Hall sound.

The Heifetz performance of *Tzigane* is grounds enough to investigate the new Victor disc, which features an "enhanced" version of his earlier Tchaikovsky *Concerto*. Nobody in the world plays the little Ravel masterpiece with so much effect, and certainly it is about time that he did it for microgroove. The Sinding work is completely violinistic, but beyond that it is nothing. Whatever has to be said of the Heifetz Tchaikovsky has been said before; its sonic enhancement does not represent any appreciable improvement over the old version as far as these ears can tell but the new version certainly gives you more music for your money—the old one, LM-1111, included only the *Concerto*.

—J.L.

TCHAIKOVSKY: *Sleeping Beauty*; André Kostelanetz and his orchestra; Columbia LP disc ML-4960, \$3.98.

▲CONSIDERING that Columbia has a perfectly acceptable performance of *Sleeping Beauty* excerpts played by the Philadelphia Orchestra under Ormandy, one wonders why this record was issued. The recording is fine; but it is no better than that of the earlier disc. Moreover, the playing, the direction, and general style of the presentation by Kostelanetz is in no way competitive. The early LP performance by Stokowski for Victor is, by the way, the very best one-disc version of *Sleeping Beauty* excerpts. —C.J.L.

WALTON: *Portsmouth Point—An Overture*; *Siesta*; *Scapino—Comedy Overture*;

BACH-WALTON: *The Wise Virgins—Ballet Suite*; the London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. London LP LL-1165, \$3.98.

▲FROM any point of view this is a superb disc—unless of course you are not an admirer of Sir William Walton's music. Myself, I find even his slightest efforts highly listenable and rewarding. Every-

The American Record Guide

thing but the hyphenated work on this program is new to microgroove as far as I know: *Portsmouth Point* (1925) is a robust re-creation of Rowlandson's famous waterfront scene. *Siesta* (1926) is a gently sensual evocation of the Mediterranean state that its title denotes. *Scapino* (1940) again derives its inspiration from the art gallery—in this case an etching by Callot that depicts the rascally servant of the *commedia dell' arte*. Boult's interpretations evidence true sympathy, and the musicians and engineers alike were similarly dedicated. Likewise with *The Wise Virgins*, that beautiful *cum*-Beecham hybrid for which we have to thank Sadler's Wells; it was there that Ashton's *The Wise and Foolish Virgins*, for which Walton contrived this score, was mounted in 1939. Litschauer's version, on Vanguard, is a first-class performance as well, and it is deliciously coupled with *The Good-Humored Ladies*, but in all objectivity I must recommend the London issue for its overall excellences. Besides, the Scarlatti music is otherwise available in a splendid performance by Désormière, paired with the enchanting *Les Biches* of Poulenc.

—J.L.

CHAMBER MUSIC

BACH: *Unaccompanied Cello Suites No. 2 in D Minor and No. 6 in D Major*; Antonio Janigro (cello). Westminster LP WL-5348, \$5.95.

▲**JANIGRO** is perhaps the sovereign intellect among the great cellists of the day. Casals being in a class apart, it seems rather unfair to pit Janigro against Starker and attempt to break down their respective virtues. To say that Starker is the more gifted executant would be the simple truth, but in music like this the goal is not mere virtuosity. I daresay that Janigro would mess up something like the Kodaly *Opus 8*, which Starker has said absolutely the last word on. On the other hand I know of not one artist before the public today who can put so much into the Bach *Suites*, and get so much out while he is at it, as Jani-

May, 1955

gro does. The phrasing is all but flawless, the intonation likewise. If the emotional content falls below what it might be, the insight into more strictly musical values is beyond reproach or comparison. Those listeners who can address themselves to this repertory with the requisite awe, which I can do only on occasion, will find Janigro's playing an amazing revelation. Typically excellent Westminster studio sound. —J.L.

FRANCK: *Sonata in A major*; **SZYMANOWSKI:** *Sonata in D minor Op. 9*; David Oistrakh (violin) and Vladimir Yampolsky (piano). Angel 35163, \$4.98.

▲THIS is a better recorded performance of the Franck sonata than the earlier issue by Vanguard. Once again, one is swayed by the extraordinary musicianship of Oistrakh. One would not have expected him to be able to ally himself to the romantic qualities of this music as closely as he does. The pianist, who has been associated with the violinist for the past ten years, is equally as fine a musician. Together, they give one of the finest performances of the Franck sonata on records. If I prefer the Francescatti-Casadesus version, it is because they bring more life to the music and even a degree of elegance I do not find here. Oistrakh adopts what seems like a slower tempo, but this actually is a matter of temperament. Those who go in for duplications will undoubtedly add this performance to their collection along with the Francescatti-Casadesus one. The Szymanowski is an early work, The impassioned, rhapsodic characteristics of this composer, heard in his later works, are only hinted at here for this sonata dates from his student days. Curiously, it has a poetic relation to the Franck but of a German—Brahmsian says the annotator. There is a dreamy poetic quality to this music that invites relaxation or repudiation depending on one's reactions. Oistrakh and Yampolsky perform it with knowing artistry, though curiously here the violinist's tone varies from dulcet smoothness to stridency on

303

occasion. The presence of the violinist is very real.

—P.H.R.

NIELSEN: *String Quartet No. 4, Op. 44;*
HOLMBOE: *String Quartet No. 3,*
Op. 48; The Koppel Quartet. London
LL-1119, \$3.98.

▲THE GENIUS of Carl Nielsen is further attested by acquaintance with his last quartet, which is masterfully written for the four string instruments. The Danish annotator tells us that Nielsen made a serious study of the *true nature* of the instruments, and this opus assuredly conveys complete comprehension of the four-string medium. Both of these quartets are absolute music that do not suggest any outside similes. The Nielsen, like its partner, is a contrapuntal work in which the homogeneity of the whole belies the independently developed parts, so perfectly do the strands of his canvas coalesce and yet affirm their independence. Emotionally, this music covers a wide range from the poetic graciousness of the opening movement through the quasi-religious sentiment of the slow movement, the humorous scherzo and the gay but graceful finale. It is a work that will repay repeated hearings.

The quartet of Vagn Holmboe (born 1909) is more modern and intensely serious. He, too, knows how to write for the strings and for the form. Regarded as the foremost symphonist since Nielsen, Holmboe is one of the leading composers of modern Denmark. His style seems to derive from Nielsen and Bartók, a curious coalition which he has homogenized in a remarkable manner. Like Bartók, he passes through passages of astringency to ones of relieving tension. While he is consistently austere, he is, as one British writer—Robert Simpson—has said, "utterly free from the more dismal qualities of self-conscious contemporary music. . . . He composes quite spontaneously; but he disciplines what flows out of him with great severity." He lacks the gentle humor of Nielsen but is nonetheless master of his materials. His quartet is in five movements—three of which are slow ones of moving fervor,

notably the finale. As with Bartók, the listener is carried along by his amazing concentration and in the end, one is aware of a strong musical personality who invites closer companionship. The performances are exceptionally fine ones conveying careful preparation and thoughtful workmanship. The ensemble is a highly proficient one, named for its fine violist, though the first violinist tends to dominate with his sometimes piercing tone. The recording is excellent. —P.H.R.

MOZART: *Sonata No. 21 in E minor, K.304;* *Sonata No. 26 in B flat, K.378;*
Sonata No. 33 in E flat, K.481; Brenton
Langbein (violin) and Maureen Jones
(piano). London LP disc LL-1069,
\$3.98.

▲HERE are three of the finest Mozart violin sonatas, recorded with such warmth of sound and becoming presence that many will want them, despite the less-than-first-rate performances. Miss Jones' playing has the requisite tonal hues and rhythmic verve but Langbein's work seems earthbound and lacking in personality. The preference here (for this music) is the very fine but sonically dated Kraus-Goldberg performances on Decca. —C.J.L.

MOZART: *Serenade No. 11 in E flat, K. 375;* *Serenade No. 12 in C minor, K. 388;* Arthur Winograd (conductor). MGM LP disc E-3159, \$3.98. *Divertimenti in E flat and B flat, K.A.N.H.-226 and 227;* Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group. Westminster LP disc WL-5349, \$5.95.

▲STUDY of these two new discs allows one to make some interesting comparisons. The wind playing on the MGM disc is by some of America's finest soloists, e.g. Arthur and Harry Berv (horns), Augustin Duques (clarinet). It is crisp, well defined and articulated sound. The Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group, made up of some of the admirable first-desk players from that estimable orchestra, is clean and a bit sweet and mellow as to sound. Both groups are very agreeable, indeed. The big difference in quality is in the ensemble. The Viennese group is the

The American Record Guide

more refined and yet, too, the more animated. They have obviously been playing together for a longer time than the American group. The American recording accents the virtues of its group; the Westminster the delights of the Viennese playing. As far as the music goes, the serenades are, of course, the stronger works (the *C minor* is a masterpiece by anyone's standards). The divertimentos are but pleasant trifles made to seem more important than they are by such presentation as they are given. The Vienna Philharmonic Wind Group has already recorded the serenades for Westminster and that disc (WL-5021) is one of the great things in the LP catalog.

—C.J.L.

KEYBOARD

DEBUSSY: *12 Etudes*; Hans Henkemans (piano). Epic LP disc LC-3104, \$3.98.

▲AN outstanding presentation of these hard-to-bring-off studies. The Debussy etudes are fascinating to many musicians; they represent the summation of post-Listzian piano technique; they are his last works for piano. They are short in emotional communication, but they are obviously the product of a master craftsman. They are not merely finger exercises. Each number specifies some particular pianistic difficulty, to be sure, but always one that arises from a musical problem concerning texture, harmony, or rhythm. The Debussy etudes are not apt to gain a popular following, but they are certainly impressive as performed by Hans Henkemans. This is splendid playing, abetted by first class engineering. Recommended.

—C.J.L.

LECUONA: *Andalucia Suite*; *Zambra Gilana*; *Granada*; *Siboney*; *Pablos Flores* (piano). MGM LP E-199, \$2.98.

▲THERE is no denying the authenticity of these performances, but the musical content of the pieces is distressingly thin. The Echaniz-Westminster Lecuona program, issued last month, is far better

May, 1955

engineered, although it has the disadvantage of containing even *more* Lecuona. I take it that this disc was made somewhat earlier than most other current MGM releases; the dull sound and heavy surface noise do not fairly represent that firm's more recent efforts.

—J.L.

MacDOWELL: *Sonata tragica*, Op. 45; *Sonata eroica*, Op. 50; Perry O'Neill (piano). SPA-63, \$5.95.

▲EDWARD MacDOWELL (1861-1908) has been called the most talented American composer of the 19th century. A gifted pianist, his most characteristic work was accomplished for that instrument. It has been pointed out that his Celtic origin contributed to his melodies and rhythms, but his twelve years spent in Germany, where he studied with the composer Raff, allied him in part to that European school. His piano sonatas have been sadly neglected in recent years, and it is good to see a young American pianist, who has the technique and the tonal quality to do justice to them, attempting a revival in interest. MacDowell liked a poetic basis in music and both of these sonatas derive from such a basis, though only in the case of the *Sonata eroica* do we know the composer's intent, which has to do with the legend of King Arthur. The *Sonata tragica* suggests a personalized grief, perhaps the death of Raff which happened shortly before. MacDowell deserved to be remembered for his piano works, and we already have recordings of his two concertos. However, his sonatas, far more individual, deserve to be equally well known. The recording is excellent.

—P.H.R.

MILHAUD: *Saudades do Brasil*; **VILLA-LOBOS:** *Saudades das Selvas Brasileiras*; *Poema Singelo*; *Suite Floral*; *Choros No. 5*; Lenore Engdahl (piano). MGM LP disc E-3158, \$3.98.

▲THIS attractive disc introduces us to Lenore Engdahl, an American pianist of some distinction to judge by her playing here. It allows us to study closely for the first time some of Villa-Lobos' early, fertile

writing. A real individualist, Villa-Lobos (in this collection) reveals outside influences only once—in the Debussy-like *Suite Floral* which dates from 1917. It comprises three pleasant mood pieces with some of the Brazilian flavor one gets at full strength in the absorbing *Saudades das Selvas Brasileiras* (1927) and the *Choros No. 5* subtitled the *Soul of Brazil* (1926). There is no attempt in these works to transcribe Brazilian folk music, but rather to imitate its feeling within highly personal musical forms. I find the *Poema Singelo* (1942) formless and uninteresting. Villa-Lobos' best writing is unusually grateful for the pianist; it is full of color, sounds exceedingly well. It is evocative of a cultural landscape so strange to us that it may be this freshness is the source of the music's charm. Milhaud's colorful and nostalgic pieces about urban life in Brazil are gentle, clever (but not aggressively so), tuneful, but all the same a shade disappointing. Their expression is low in power, their pictorial qualities a bit indistinct. They are so well conceived for the piano, however, that pianists invariably like them.

—C.J.L.

RAVEL: *Oiseaux tristes*; **DEBUSSY:** *Soirée dans Grenade*; *Les Collines d'Anacapri*; **MARESCOTTI:** *Fantasque*; **GAGNEBIN:** *Première Toccata*; Lottie Morel (piano). London 10" LP disc LD-9149, \$2.98.

▲IMPRESSIONISM by the masters and the imitators, Marescotti and Gagnebin, both associated with the Geneva *Conservatoire*, are represented by works that make them sound curiously old fashioned and completely beholden to the methods Debussy used to express himself. This music would, however, seem to be better served by Lottie Morel than that of the French masters. In spite of a good command of the tonal capacities of her instrument, Miss Morel lacks the degree of rhythmic alacrity necessary for *Les Collines* and *Soirée*; *Oiseaux tristes* seems slack and lifeless. Fine sound. —C.J.L.

SCHUMANN: *Etudes Symphoniques*, Op. 13; *Fantasia in C*, Op. 17; Yuri Boukoff (piano). Epic LP disc LC-3094, \$3.98.

306

▲PRAISEWORTHY comments about a young Bulgarian (I believe) pianist named Yuri Boukoff have been coming out of Europe for the past two years or so. So far as I know, this is Boukoff's recording debut. It is promising for technical strength, a flair for tonal shading, and a certain poetic impulse for the inward emotions. At the moment, Boukoff seems capable of giving a good measure of pleasure. But he lacks sufficient passion for the music at hand, and he does not yet (at least in Schumann) build a piece so that you can see its architecture. As you might suspect, he is better in a work like the *Etudes Symphoniques* (it is made up of short numbers) than in the grand and sprawling *Fantasia*. The recommended versions of the *Etudes* are those by Yves Nat and Geza Anda; for the *Fantasia*, Clifford Curzon. But you had better keep your eye on Boukoff; he's a comer. It is rumored that Westminster has either signed or will sign Boukoff in the near future.

—C.J.L.

VOICE

MEMORIES OF THE VIENNA THEATRE

TRE: Vol. 1, *Selections from Wiener Blut* (Strauss-Schoenherr), *Die Fledermaus* (Strauss), *Sissi* (Kreisler), *Gräfin Mariza* (Kálmán), *Der tapfere Soldat* (Strauss); *Madame Pompadour*; *Die Dollarprinzessin* (Fall), *Zigeunerleben* (Lehar). Vol. 2, *Selections from Hoheit tanzt Walzer* (Ascher); *Der Schatzmeister* (Ziehrer); *Der Zarewitch*; Schoen ist die Welt (Léhar); Rund um die Liebe (Straus); *Die lustige Witwe* (Léhar); *Ein Walzertraum* (Straus); *Weiner Blut* (Strauss-Schönherr); *Die Taenzerin Fanny Elssler* (Strauss-Stalla); Hilde Gueden (soprano), with Vienna State Opera Orchestra, conducted by Max Schoenherr. London LD 9157-58, two 10" discs, \$4.96.

▲THERE is some confusion between the jackets and the labels here, for according to the former the two discs are Vols. 1 and 2, while the latter has them two and three. The producers, or the annotator,

The American Record Guide

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might have done well to have identified the more familiar numbers for the non-German-speaking listener: it is proper enough to list them in the language of performance, but something may be missed by those who do not recognize *The Merry Widow* as *Die lustige Witwe*, *A Waltz-Dream* as *Ein Walzertraum* or *The Chocolate Soldier* as *Der tapfere Soldat*. In any case, here is a generous sampling of the operetta repertoire, which is as familiar to the singer as that of the opera. At times in the course of the four record sides the voice floats out with magical charm. These are not actually programs, but rather *potpourris*, passing from one well-known tune to the next with perhaps a brief transition provided by Mr. Schoenherr's luxuriant orchestra. All in all these are discs to invite nostalgia, and to bring pleasure to those who like the Viennese lilt in their waltzes.

—P.L.M.

PURCELL: *Come, Ye Sons of Art* (*Birthday Ode, 1694*); Margaret Ritchie (soprano), Alfred Deller & John Whitworth (counter-tenors), Bruce Boyce (baritone), St. Anthony Singers & L'Ensemble Orchestral de l'Oiseau-Lyre conducted by Anthony Lewis, with Ruggero Gerlin (harpsichord). 10" Oiseau-Lyre 53004, \$2.98.

▲THIS work is the last of six Odes written for Queen Mary, wife of William III. The first performance took place on April 30, 1694. The verses are quite undistinguished, but the score is effective, because Purcell obviously enjoyed writing it. A portion of the opening *Symphony* was drawn from Purcell's earlier *The Indian Queen*. The orchestra consists of flutes, oboes, trumpets, drums, strings and continuo with chorus and soloists. Male altos (or counter-tenors) were common in Purcell's time, so he wrote a good deal of music for them. One of his most famous pieces, the duet, *Sound the Trumpet*, was originally written for two altos. How fortunate are we to have it sung as brilliantly as in this performance by Alfred Deller and John Whitworth! The long florid passages are tossed off

May, 1955

like child's play and the general effect is most satisfactory, once one becomes used to the voices. The other soloists are first-rate and the recorded sound is excellent. The balance between the chorus and the orchestra is good. This performance is heartily recommended. Incidentally, the score is recorded complete, with the exception of a few repeats.

—R.H.R.

SPIRITUALS: *Weepin' Mary; Ol-Time Religion; I want Jesus to Walk with Me; Ride on, King Jesus; De Blin' Man Stood on de Road; Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit; Nobody Knows de Trouble I've seen; We are Clim'in Jacob's Ladder; De Gospel Train; Couldn't Hear Nobody Pray; Sometimes I Feel like a Motherless Chile; All God's Chillun Got Wings; Peter, Go Ring dem Bells; Wade in de Water; Let us Break Bread Together; Roll, Jordan, Roll; Lil'le David, Play on yo' Harp; Sinner, Please don't let this Harvest Pass* (Orchestral and choral arrangements by Sam Morgenstern); *Lucretia West* (mezzo-soprano), Jonathan Brice (piano), Westminster Light Orchestra and Male Quartet, conducted by Sam Morgenstern. Westminster WL-5338, \$5.95.

▲**LUCRETIA WEST** has one of those warm, melting voices peculiar to her race, a voice with the quality to make the Spirituals thrilling. She sings her songs in two manners here, some—to more or less familiar piano accompaniments (no arrangers' names are given for these) and some using the coloristic devices possible to chorus and orchestra. Of course the results should not be classified among the folk music: indeed, I think it should be set down as dogma that folk song ceases to be folk song when sung by a trained voice. When this has been said, it is only necessary to add that Morgenstern has obviously enjoyed using his elaborate means to capture something of the primitive spirit in which these songs were born. His use of the trumpet in *Ride on, King Jesus* and *Let us Break Bread Together* has tremendous impact,

and his male quartet "gives" in the manner of a true revival. —P.L.M.

▲**Strauss:** *Capriccio—Nocturne and Finale*; with Franz Bierbach (bass). *Ariadne auf Naxos—Es gibt ein Reich. Arabella—Der Richtige, so hab' ich still zu mir gesagt*; with Paul Schoeffler (baritone). All sung by Lisa della Casa (soprano) with Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Heinrich Hollreiser. London LP disc LL-1047, \$3.98.

▲**LISA DELLA CASA** has predominantly a warm but detached musical temperament. She is obviously a cultured woman who knows different styles of vocal music, but languages and enunciation are not among her strong points. She is, generally speaking, at her best in music which is not outspoken emotionally. I believe she is more a musical than a dramatic spirit, judging from the several operatic roles I have heard her perform. And perhaps this situation is what keeps this new, well recorded disc from being any more effective than it is. The finale of *Capriccio* asks for more inner passion than Miss Della Casa seems able to give. And Ariadne's aria surely asks for a greater measure of pathos. The loveliest music on the record is the second act duet from *Arabella*, one of the really memorable passages in Strauss' operatic output. Happily, Miss della Casa is at her best here, and she is ably supported by that splendid artist Paul Schoeffler. Serene, tender, exalted, personal, this performance matches the strength of the music.

—C.J.L.

result of serious, not trivial thought); but it is tense, hectic, violent and without the proper ease and coruscating flow. Giesecking has decidedly preserved my preferred version on LP of this very lovely and underrated concerto. I am afraid the Philadelphia Orchestra is a bit too large, also, to make the impression one wants. When they are not blanketed, the woodwinds are inclined, because they must play so loud to balance with the strings, to be a trifle insensitive tonally. —C.J.L.

▲**BIZET:** *Symphony No. 1 in C; Patrie—Overture. Op. 19; L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande* conducted by Ernest Ansermet. London LP LL-1186, \$3.98.

▲**ANSERMET** gives us Bizet at face value, which is all right unless you have come under the spell of Stokowski or Cluytens. The latter seems to find more substance in this composer's music than any other conductor. Admittedly, however, Bizet's ebullient surface lends itself to the scintillating Ansermet treatment. The *Symphony* is romped through as if it were a talented student's best imitation of Mozart, and the overture comes out a patriotic speech with stentorian aspects. Glistening ensemble work throughout, and button-bright sound of course. —J.L.

▲**BRUCKNER:** *Mass no. 2 in E minor*; Hamburg State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Max Thurn. Telefunken LGX 66033, \$4.98.

▲**THIS** recording was available in the late thirties as an importation, and was later issued on LP as Capitol P 8004. Reviewing a rival performance — Victor M 596—which has not been transferred from 78 rpm, I made the following comparison in these pages, November 1939: "In tonal quality the Hamburg Opera Chorus seems to me to be better than the Aachen Cathedral Choir (in which boys' voices are used) and the balance is generally a bit better. On the other hand, there is slightly greater clarity in the reproduction of the Victor set." One serious objection to the Telefunken version was that fact that it was slightly cut, while the Victor was complete. In its new manifestation the recording sounds reasonably well. Of course neither its age nor its incompleteness can assail its position today as the only available version of an interesting and imposing Mass. —P.L.M.

RECORD ROUNDUP

▲**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Concerto No. 1 in C. Op. 15*; Rudolf Serkin (piano) with Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP disc ML-4914, \$3.98.

▲**ONE** would have to go far to match the natural balance between soloist and orchestra that this superbly engineered disc affords. This is a model of what a piano concerto recording ought to be. In spite of its slickness of execution, the performance is not a model of what an ideal rendering of this music ought to be. Serkin's work has its moments of physical excitement (and, of course, it is the

308

MARIA CALLAS SINGS (in Italian): *Tristan and Isolde—Love Death (Wagner); I Puritani—Qui la voce sua sone and Vien diletto (Bellini); La Traviata—Ah! fors' e lui, Sempre libera, and Addio del passato (Verdi); La Gioconda—Suicidio; with Symphony Orchestras conducted by Arturo Basile, Gabriele Santini and Antonio Votto. Cetra 50175, \$4.98.*

▲**THE VERSATILITY** of Maria Callas never ceases to astonish me, and here we have an idea of what to expect if she decides to add Isolde to her repertoire. Strangely, Wagner's music lends itself to the Italian language though it alters the character of some of the phrasing. But in Italian or

The American Record Guide

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Germann, Callas suggests she might be an impressive Isolde. This and the *I Puritani* arias were taken from earlier recordings made by the soprano, originally released on 78-rpm discs. The *Traviata* and *Gioconda* are taken from her Cetra opera performances. Even if one owns those sets and the Angel *Puritani* one, many of the soprano's admirers will buy this record for her *Liebestod*. The recording varies but it is nonetheless eminently satisfying.

—J.N.

CHOPIN: *Etudes, Op. 10; Scherzo No. 1 in B minor, Op. 20*; Guiomar Novaes (piano). Vox PL-9070, \$5.95.

▲SOMEHOW Mme. Novaes does not succeed with the *Etudes* of Chopin like she does in other music by the composer. It is probably owing to the fact that essentially her artistry has an improvisatory character which does not suit the music. These works are subtle and brilliant studies that ask for the grand manner. *Opus 10* was dedicated to Liszt, who must have performed these works with imagination and not with the often curious accents that Novaes brings to them. Some of her playing lacks essential clarity which may be due to recording, though the reproduction is otherwise tonally quite realistic. The disc is worth acquiring for her fine performance of the *Scherzo* with its lovely lyricism, though personally I feel that Rubinstein is unexcelled to date in his performances of all the *Scherzos*.

—P.H.R.

CHORUSES FROM GERMAN OPERA: *Tannhäuser*—*Freudig begrüssen; Beglückt darf nun* (Wagner); *Der Freischwartz*—*Was gleicht wohl auf Erden* (Weber); *Das Nachtlager in Granada*—*Schoen die Abendglocken klängen* (Kreutzer); Berlin State Opera Chorus and Orchestra, conducted by Hansgeorg Otto. Telefunken TM 68031, 10", \$2.98.

▲I SUPPOSE the appeal of this disc will be mostly to Germans who have been brought up on these old favorites. The *Entrance of the Guests* from *Tannhäuser* is given a brisk workout—these good Thuringians must have been a lightfooted lot—and rather roughly recorded. In the next selection the Pilgrims don't seem to come from any great distance, and they sing their chorus as something all in the day's work. The *Nachtlager* chorus is more interesting because more novel. Here matters get off to a confused start with the horns, but they pick up, and there is plenty of spirit. Best of all as a performance is the *Hunter's Chorus* from *Freischwartz*, a beautiful passage acceptably presented.

—P.L.M.

FAMOUS TENOR ARIAS: 'Don Giovanni'—*Il mio tesoro & Dalla sua pace* (Mozart); *Lucia*—*Tu che a Dio & Tombe degli avi miei* (Donizetti); *Werther*—*O nature & Pourquoi me réveiller*; *Manon*—*La Reve & Ah! fuyez, douce image*; Cesare Valetti with orchestra conducted by Arturo Basile. Capitol AS0176, \$3.98.

VALETTI'S expressive singing of the arias from *Don Giovanni* and *Lucia* are tribute to his fine

musicianship. He is less successful in the *Manon* music where his constricted high tone in "The Dream" spoils his otherwise smooth singing, and *Ah! fuyez* requires a larger voice than his for true effectiveness. The arias from *Werther* are better sung. Good sound.

—J.N.

GRIEG: *Ballade in G minor, Op. 24; Cradle Song; Spring Dance; Bercense; Folk Song; Papillon*; etc.; Artur Rubinstein (piano). RCA Victor LM-1872, \$3.98.

▲IT is good to have a pianist of Rubinstein's standing performing a program of Grieg's twelve lyric pieces for the piano and the fine *Ballade*. The latter has been previously recorded by Anderson and Pressler, but neither artist gives a performance comparable to Rubinstein. The coloration and richness of sound that he attains in this work as well as the lyric pieces gives the music a glowing life that serves Grieg to advantage. Victor has realistically captured the tone of Rubinstein's piano.

—P.H.R.

KHACHATURIAN: *Violin Concerto*; Thomas Magyar (violin) and the Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Moralt. Epic LP LC-3080, \$3.98.

▲THIS score wears thinner and thinner, but the violinists still like it for obvious reasons. Few vehicles offer so much opportunity for displaying the fiddler's wares, and always to favorable advantage if the soloist owns the minimum virtuoso talent. Magyar turns out a splendid job, somewhat heavy-handedly assisted by Moralt. For pure sheer nothing beats the old Oistrakh, but both Oistrakh Jr. and Kogan have given us more exciting performances than this one. The sound is bass-heavy but otherwise impressive.

—J.L.

LISZT: *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2; MASSENET: Werther—Prelude & La Nuit de Noël; L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris*, Albert Wolff (cond.). London 10" LD-9171, \$2.98.

▲STRANGE coupling. The veteran Albert Wolff is more at home in the Massenet music than in the Liszt. The recording is especially appealing in the *Werther* selections with its tonal warmth befitting the charm of sentiment in the music. It's good enough in Liszt, but there are performances of this *Rhapsody* that are better played and coupled, notably by Ormandy and Scherchen.

—J.N.

OPERA INTERMEZZI—from *Cavalleria Rusticana* (Mascagni), *Pagliacci* (Leoncavallo), *Harry Janos* (Kodaly), and *Goyescas* (Granados); also *Barcarolle* from *Tales of Hoffman* (Offenbach), *Prelude to Act 3 of Manon Lescaut* (Puccini), *Entr'acte before Act 4 of Carmen* (Bizet), *Meditation from Thais* (Massenet), *Entr'acte before Act 4 of Khorovatchina* (Moussorgsky), *Prelude to Act 3 of La Traviata* (Verdi), and *Prelude to Act 3 of L'Amico Fritz* (Mascagni); the Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Herbert von Karajan. Angel LP 35207, \$4.98.

▲MORE and more, as the recorded opera repertory grows, I am inclined to question the efficacy of these tid-bit collections. But presumably there is a market for them and it is always a pleasure to find one that is invested with the same care you would expect to discern in more ambitious projects. Karajan has given us exquisitely tooled performances, and the recorded sound is all that one could ask for. —J.L.

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SAINT-SAENS: *Piano Concerto No. 2 in G minor, Op. 22*; Emil Gilels (piano) with *L'Orchestre de la Societe des Concerts du Conservatoire* conducted by Andre Cluytens; **MOZART:** *Piano Sonata No. 16 in B flat, K.570*; Emil Gilels. Angel LP disc Ang.35132, \$5.95 or \$4.95.

▲THESE are good but not sensational recordings by the fine Soviet pianist Emil Gilels. Accomplished last spring in Paris, they are a bit too close for comfort to the boxy, studio-type engineering any pre-war phonophile remembers. Still, they are streets ahead of the Russian recordings of Gilels we have heard. Here, the pianist had, for him, what I suspect was an off day. The outer movements of the Mozart are deftly played with the proper spirit and sparkle, but the slow section does not move, seems earthbound rhythmically. The opening movement of the Saint-Saens concerto is too broad and rhetorical to suit its content. The style is right in the delightful last two sections, but some of Gilels' passage work is a trifle blurred and the playing in general wants a more relaxed flow. The Lympany-Martinon performance might well be preferred. —C.J.L.

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SIBELIUS: *Symphony No. 2 in D, Op. 43*; the Halle Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli. RCA Victor-Bluebird LP LBC-1084, \$2.98.

▲FOR economy you can't beat this. Musically, the ancient Koussevitzky version now transferred to Camden is superior, but its sound is terrible. Otherwise, Barbirolli elicits a performance that is every bit as good as virtually any other one on records. He always was a Sibelian, and by now his well-drilled Halle forces know just how to please him. The sound, considering the price, is quite remarkably up to par. —J.L.

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TCHAIKOVSKY: *Symphony No. 6 in B Minor ("Pathétique")*; the Hamburg Radio Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt. Telefunken LP LGX-66031, \$4.98.

▲THIS performance simply is not up to the standards set by Ormandy, Karajan or Bernstein. The last-named is my own favorite, in the absence of a recent Koussevitzky or Furtwangler version. The Hamburg ensemble gets pretty ragged at times, and nowhere does Schmidt-Isserstedt get to the emotional heart of the music. —J.L.

VILLA-LOBOS: *Trio for oboe, clarinet and bassoon*; *Quartet for flute, oboe, clarinet and bassoon*; *Quintette en Forme de Choros*; the New Art Wind Quintet. Westminster LP WL-5360, \$5.95.

▲CAPTIVATING little Stravinskysque blip-blips, with an occasional jungle peep and all the rest of what you are apt to encounter in Villa-Lobos. Dating from 1921 (the *Trio*) and 1928, these works are among the most lovable that the unpredictable Brazilian eclectic ever wrote, and the New Art boys and girls turn them out handily. The rhythms and the textures are everywhere a delight. Fine sound. —J.N.

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WAGNER: *Lohengrin—Mein lieber Schwan; Hochstes Vertrauen; In ferhem Land; Meistersinger—Am stillen Herd; Fugget an!; Morgenlich leuchend; Rienzi—Almaecht'ger Vater, blick' herab; Der fliegende Hollaender—Willst jenes Tag's du nicht mehr entsinnen?*; Hans Hopf (tenor) with Vienna Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rudolf Moralt. Epic LC 3103, \$3.98.

▲MR. HOPF, as noted before, is a better than average German tenor, and so he seems in this recital. Still, he is not untypical of the breed; his ample, healthy voice is sometimes rather hard and unyielding. There are at least two of the not quite inevitable tenor arias on this program—those from *Rienzi* and *The Flying Dutchman*—and there is one mislabeling: the first selection is announced as the first act *Swan Song*, while actually it is Lohengrin's *Farewell* from the last. The singing throughout is proficient and satisfactorily recorded. —P.L.M.

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WEBER: *Six Pieces for Four Hands, Op. 3; Eight Pieces for Four Hands, Op. 60*; Arthur Gold and Robert Fizdale (duo-pianists). Columbia LP disc ML-4968, \$3.98.

▲THIS disc affords an excellent demonstration of the power of performance. The music offered here, though fresh and not without charm, is prevailingly slight. The *Op. 3* shows talent under the domination of classic models; the *Op. 60* is distinctive in musical flavor but lacking in shapeliness and cogency of expression. Be that as it may, this music provides an outstanding vehicle for displaying the enormous talents of Gold and Fizdale (in my estimation the best duo-pianists since Harold Bauer and Ossip Gabrilowits). These young men use this music to show you almost every delight four hand playing has to offer. Their work is a model of its kind; so indeed is Columbia's engineering assistance. Highly recommended. —C.J.L.

POPS SPOTLIGHT

THE DISTAFF SIDES: Columbia has a recital by the enchanting Genevieve, accompanied by guitarist Luc Toret and a somewhat superfluous orchestra (CL-633); real sexy chanteusey stuff.

The American Record Guide

But the queen of them all, La Piaf, still reigns supreme; Angel has a new recital (ANG-64015) that ranges all the way from an atypical number called *Mea Culpa* to a revolutionary ditty, *Ca ira*, that she sang in the Sascha Guitry film *Versailles*. Speaking of Guitry, by the way, London has come up with a novel disc (LL-899) on which that imitable man of the theater reflects on *L'Esprit de Paris* against a piano backdrop; withal a unique souvenir of a personality who has been a world unto himself for most of our century. To get back to the ladies, there is a remarkable recital by Marlene Dietrich on Columbia (ML-4975) which was recorded in London's Cafe de Paris on the evening that Noel Coward introduced her. No voice to speak of, of course, but what a winning way this woman has about her!

ARTHUR GODFREY fans need no introduction to a comely Irish lass name of Carmel Quinn, who has been reducing every last million of them to smiles and tears whenever she opened her mouth on his weekly show. Now the dulcet-voiced Miss Quinn has made a recording for Columbia (CL-629) of a dozen of the favorites from the Emerald Isle that she has sung so successfully under Godfrey's auspices. The boss himself joins her in *Nick McGilligan's Ball* and *The Humor Is On Me Now*, but she is singularly effective in such fetching folk ditties as *If I Were a Blackbird* and the ever-persistent *Galway Bay*. Really a lovely recital.

OLD TIME RELIGION has not received its proper due on microgroove. Columbia recently brought out a recital by Mahalia Jackson, but I haven't heard it yet and a report on this will have to await its arrival. In the meantime, however, I must mention a magnificent disc by the one and only "Georgia Peach"—whose real name is Clara Hudman, but nobody knows her except as Georgia Peach. For Classic Editions she has

cut a recital of 16 songs (CE-5001) that represents gospel singing in the grandest old traditions of the American southland. Until you have heard her sing *Tired* you have just never heard it sung, brethren, and I urgently commend all admirers of authentical art to take advantage of this opportunity to do themselves a favor. Her voice may not be what it was a few years ago, but it is better, at that, than almost any other you are apt to encounter in this specialized field.

CLOSE HARMONY fans have quite a contrasting fare this month. On the one hand is a program of army songs dating from the War Between the States, with a side each for the Blue and the Gray, sung by Frank Luther and Zora Layman with the Century Quartet on Decca DL-8093. High historical interest attaches to this issue, especially in view of the success enjoyed by Columbia's recent album devoted entirely to the Confederacy. Going to the other extreme, Cadence offers the close harmony of the Chordettes (CL-1002), a quartet of pretty young things who have managed to inject a progressive note into the fine old barber shop style; their singing of *Careless Hands* and *Watermelon Weather* is downright irresistible.

THE TROPICS, or a facsimile thereof, are with us in the person of the ubiquitous Yma Sumac, whose latest is *Mambol* (Capitol H-564). No adjectives seem to fit this lady, so I merely submit that she has made another recording. In the same department is *Let's Mambo*, a batch of instrumentals by Sonny Burke and his orchestra (Decca DL-8090); nice stuff for a dance party but not especially listenable. However, if you go for Afro-Cuban stuff don't miss the new disc by Jack Costanzo on Norgan (MG-N-32); this Stan Kenton graduate knows more about the conga and bongo drums than most of the natives do.

—JAS.

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May, 1955

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to

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- INDEX — Vol. 19, 50c
- INDEX — Vol. 18, 50c
- INDEX — Vol. 17, 50c
- INDEX — Vol. 16, 35c
- INDEX — Vol. 15, 25c
- INDEX — Vol. 14, 25c
- INDEX — Vol. 13, 20c
- INDEX — Vol. 12, 20c
- INDEX — Vol. 11, 15c
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